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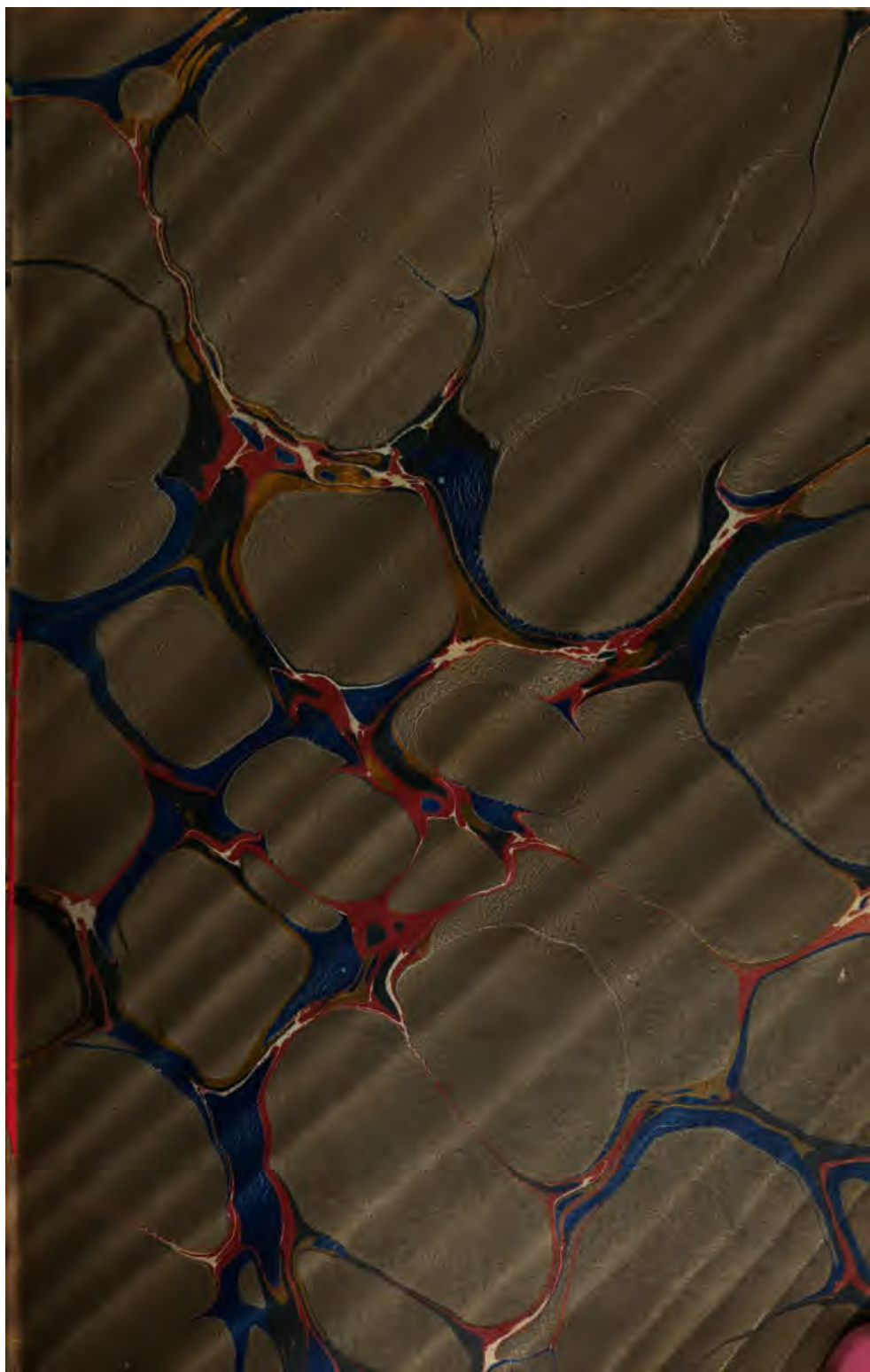


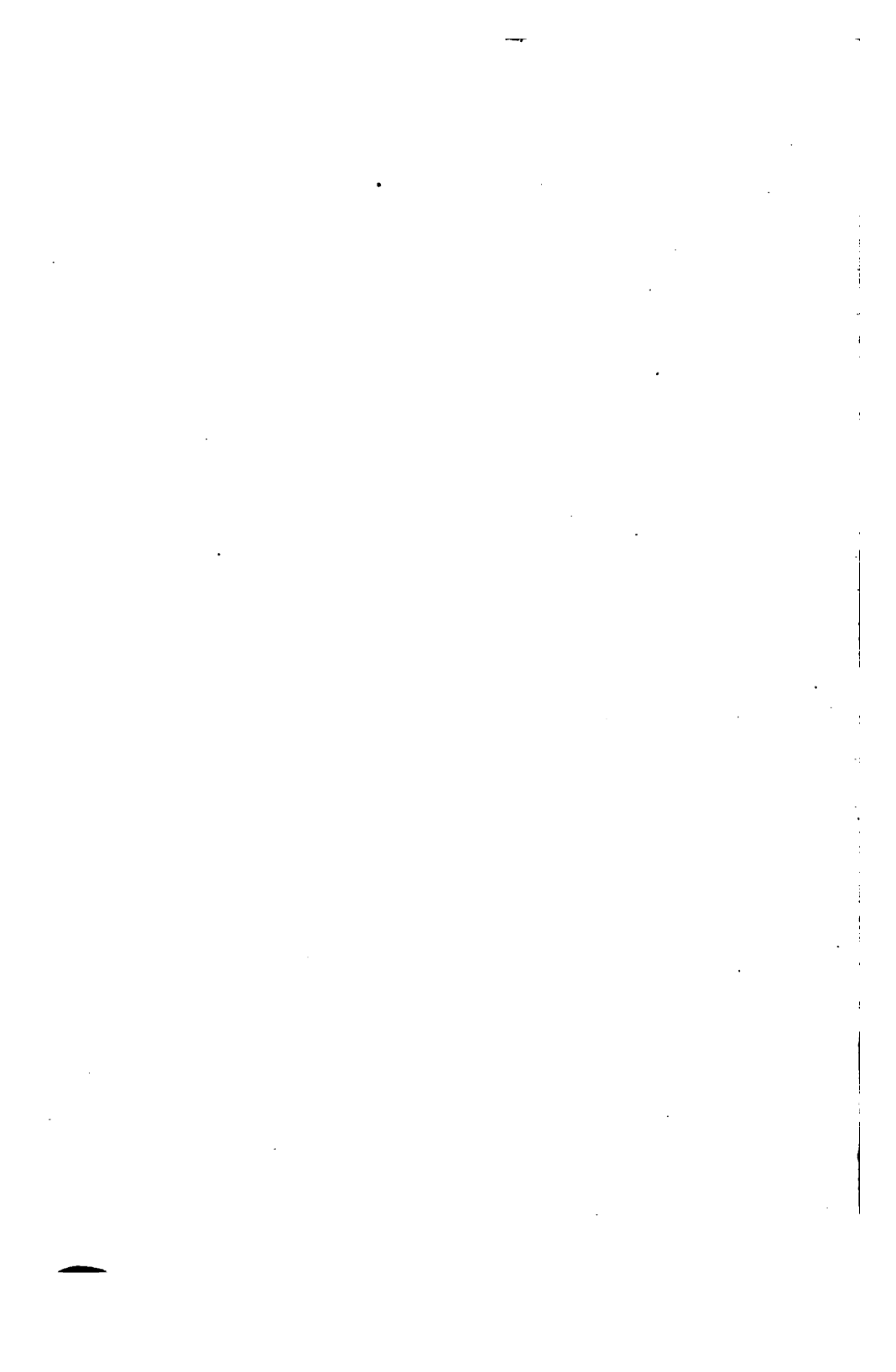
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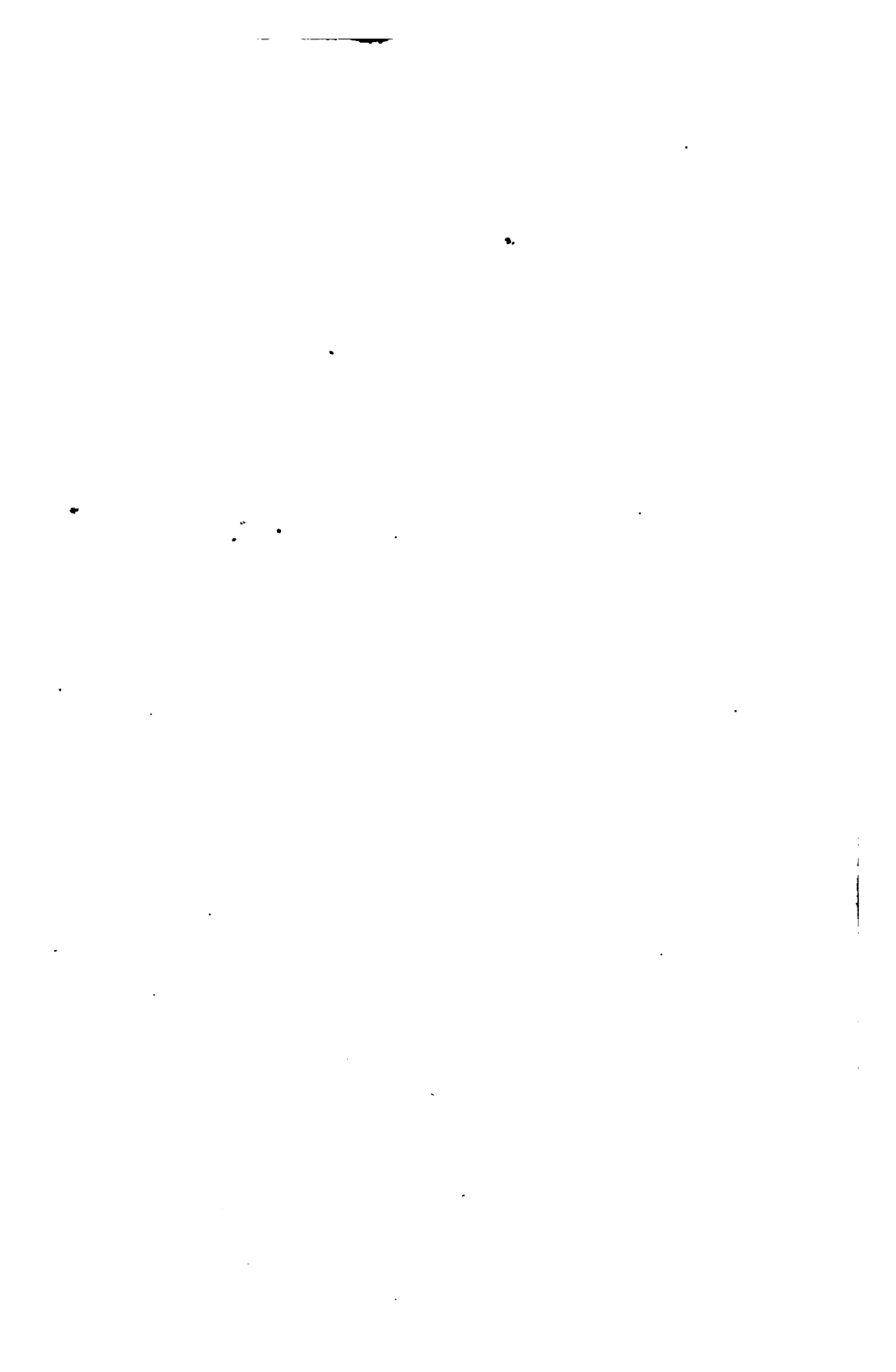
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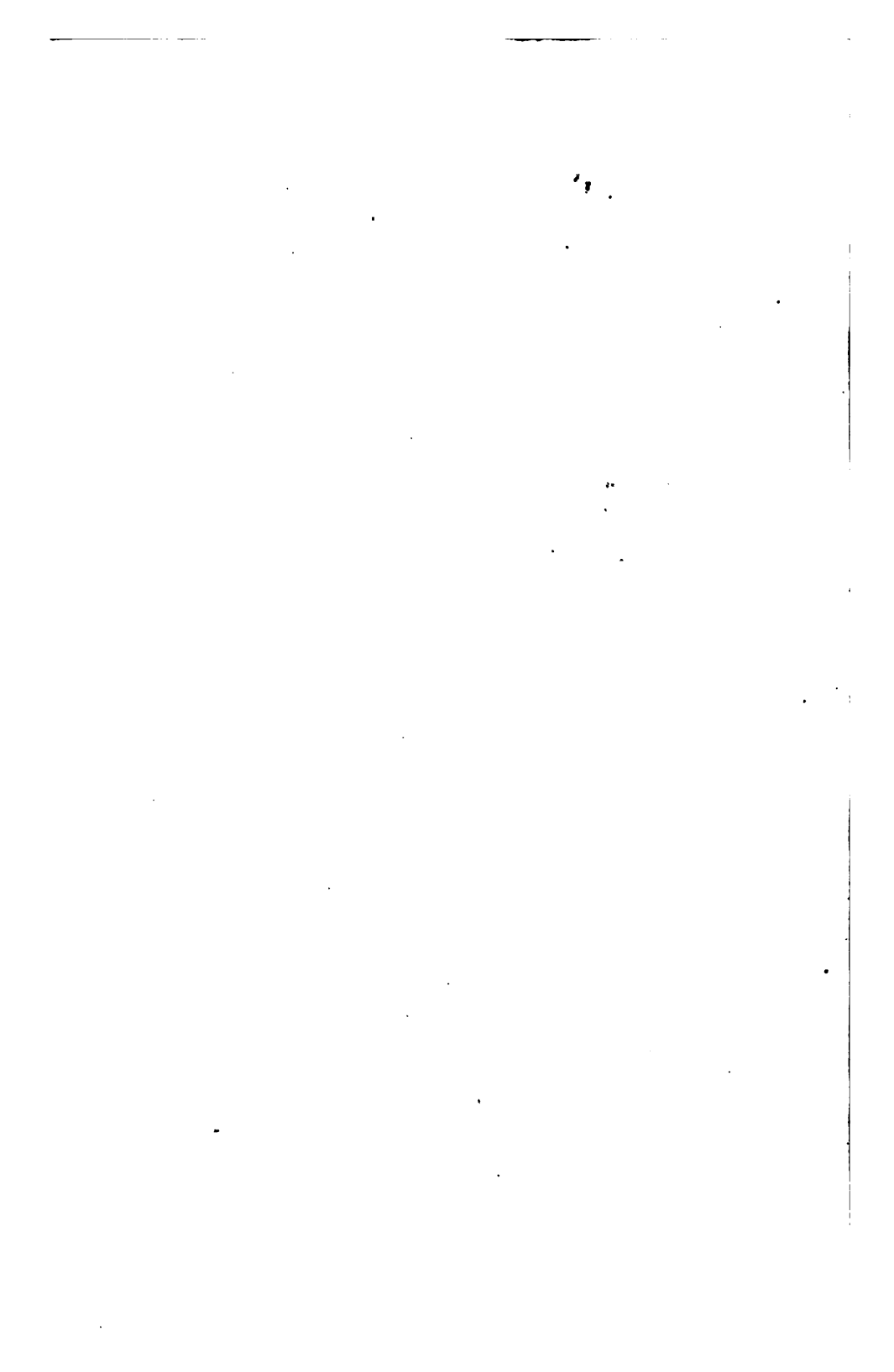
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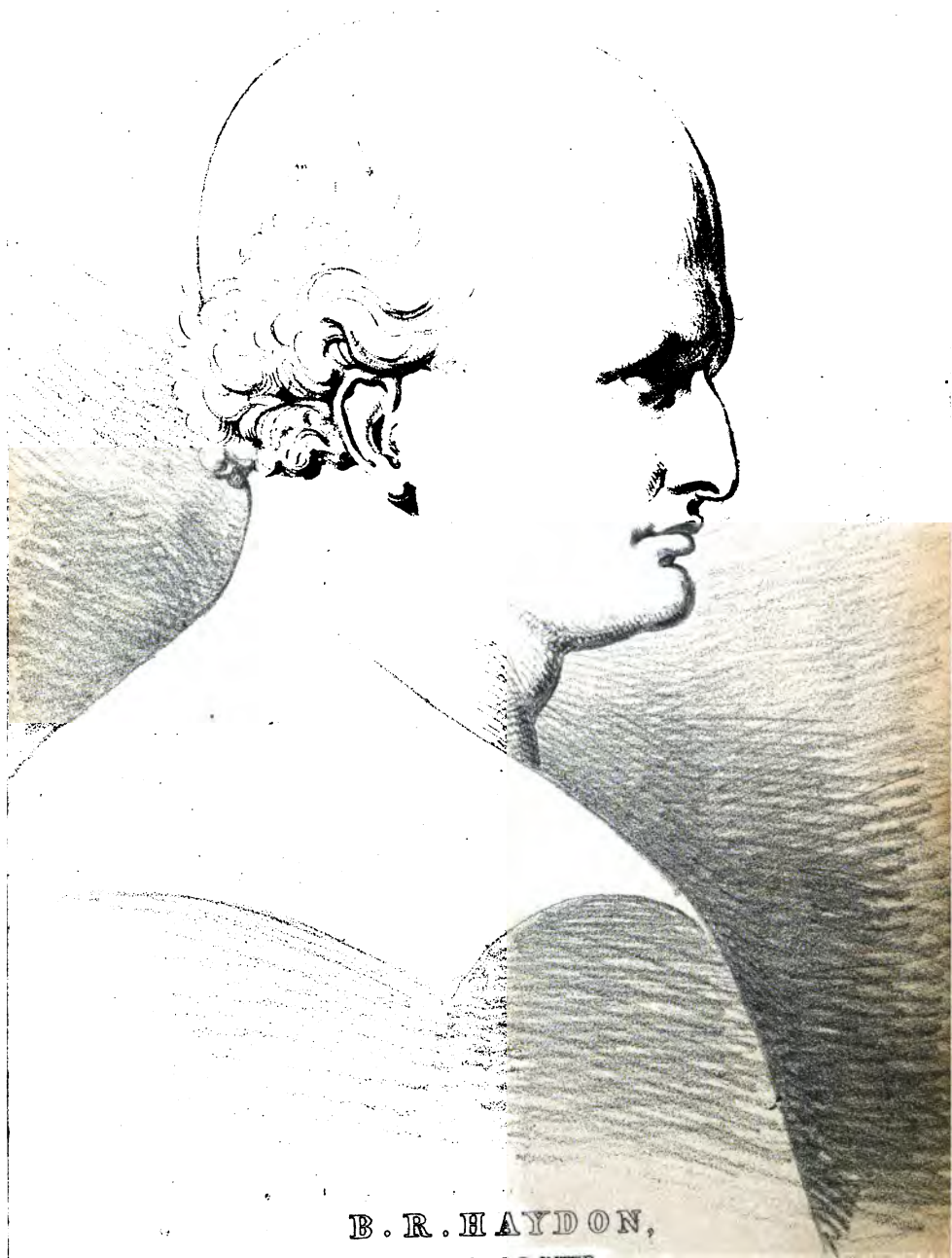












B. R. HAYDON,

HISTORICAL PAINTER,

From a Bust by

P A R K.

LECTURES
ON
PAINTING AND DESIGN

LECTURED BY
THE PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY OF ARTS,
ON THE SCOTTISH PRIZE

BY
B. R. HAYDON.

DESIGNED BY HIM.

WITH DESIGNS ON THE WALLS OF HIS SHOP.

"An artist who knows in what excellence he is deficient, and of his nature
will be an overmatch for the rest of the world, and will be able to
overcome his own weaknesses."—JOHN RUSKIN.

LONDON:

1851.

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,

PAINTER-STREET, E.C.

1851.



LECTURES
ON
PAINTING AND DESIGN:

[2]

FUZELI—WILKIE—
EFFECT OF THE SOCIETIES ON TASTE—A COMPETENT TRIBUNAL—
ON FRESCO—ELGIN MARBLES—BEAUTY.

BY
B. R. HAYDON,
Historical Painter.

WITH DESIGNS ON THE WOOD BY HIMSELF.

“An artist who knows in what excellence consists, and has learned the art of using models, will be an overmatch for the greatest painter that ever lived who should be debarred such advantages.”—REYNOLDS.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1846.

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DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION,

TO

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF SUTHERLAND,

WITH RESPECT AND GRATITUDE;

A Patron and Friend

"WHEN THE WHOLE WORLD SEEMED ADVERSE TO DESERT."



PREFACE.

THIS Second Volume of Lectures is more biographical than theoretical; but the biographies illustrate principles of Art laid down in the First Volume, and that is the reason why two men, so opposite in essence and in practice as Fuzeli and Wilkie, were selected and preferred.

Fuzeli illustrates the fatal consequences of neglecting Nature, and Wilkie the beauty and excellence of doing nothing in an Art, the language of which, in all styles, is more or less a language by imitation, without a daily recurrence to her.

From knowing intimately both these distinguished men, of course it was a difficult task to avoid altogether allusions to the connection: and in the Elgin Marble Lecture, from the fury and zeal with which the Artists know I stood up in their defence, when they were in

danger of being taken from us, in consequence of the unexpected denial of their perfection by those who, from their position in high life, ought to have known better, it was altogether impossible to avoid it; and, therefore, to escape from a repetition, which must have been offensive to the reader and myself, I have substituted the appellation of "Student." If, in the Lectures "On a Competent Tribunal," and "On the Effect of the different Societies on the Taste of the Nation," the truth has not been disguised, of the consequences of having no Professors of Art at the Universities, for the upper classes, let the reader be assured, it is not from a want of feeling for what is due to their station, but from a very deep feeling of the knowledge which becomes it.

I yield to no man in affection and respect to the Aristocracy of our glorious Country, and I would willingly shed my blood to preserve their constitutional weight in the Monarchy they grace; but since the reformation in religion; to British "High Art," with some exceptions, they have not done their duty any more than the Public Bodies, or the Sovereign. No commissions followed the display of real talent in Westminster Hall, 1843, to adorn the vacant spaces of the palaces of our nobility with the deeds of their ancestors, either in oil or fresco; and after a blaze

of ability, which startled the country, back the artists were allowed to slink, to get their daily bread by any thing they could honestly sell.

Never was a finer opportunity for a series of frescoes than in the Royal Exchange, to illustrate the progress of British Commerce, from the first trading of the Phœnicians, to Hong Kong : and yet, what has been the result ? Baskets of flowers hanging over steam-packet announcements ; griffins and eagles ; mermaids and tigers ; roses, pinks, tulips, and daisies, in galvanic ecstasies of twist and twirl ; full of talent, full of skill ; but no more to do with a decorative illustration of the objects for which the building was erected, than if the ornaments had been taken from a tea-garden alcove at Bagnigge Wells.

Even in the intended decoration of the Lords, what must it be ? a feeble return backwards to a meagre period, when poverty was simplicity ; crudeness, truth ; and the Founders of Christianity, and their Divine Master, were represented by fac-simile imitations of the lazy paupers of Italy. The painters of the time having neither knowledge, nor taste, nor power, nor poetry of mind, to elevate them out of their miserable individualities, face, figure, and feet !

What would Raphael and Michael Angelo, Titian and Rubens, Velasquez and Reynolds; Hogarth, Barry, Wilson, Wilkie, Gainsborough, or their friend Beaumont, say to the heart, patriotism, or common sense of such proceedings, were they living to witness them?

Michael Angelo rose out of the net of early Gothicism in which he found himself entangled, by the vigour of his own wings; Raphael fluttered longer, but at last up he sprang in majesty, like a morning sunbeam, to enlighten the earth he decorated with his beautiful mind. But—say the Germans—get again into the net, that you may rise as they rose, and break the threads: in they got first, but the cords are too strong for them; in we are getting, to help our friends out; and both will be held up hereafter to the amusement of Europe, fettered and entangled in their own “springes” to catch others. One hundred and fifty years ago the taste was infinitely grander; and though Verrio and Thornhill were not worthy of the time, they did their best to realize the wants of the Nobility and King.

The Art is becoming naturally a mere commercial speculation, or annual lottery, which must narrow its great calling: the feeling which burst forth amongst the

patrons in Charles's and William's time, when there were hardly any artists to meet it, does not exist now, when there are; and though all the critics blame the artists annually for the want of elevated subjects, is that their fault? What do all the exhibitions in London show? The works the artists wish to paint? Not in the least: they bring out what they are obliged to paint; they bring to market the goods which will sell.

Demand great works, well drawn, finely conceived, powerfully executed: buy them when they appear, and you will soon have youth vying with each other in producing such productions.

Westminster Hall proved that the Artists had not done annually what they could do, but what they were ordered to do; and, therefore, till a more enlightened system of patronage be in force, the Annual Exhibitions will be no test of the extent of British genius.

B. R. H.

P. S.—I beg to express my regret for omitting the town of Hull in my enumeration of the towns where I

had the honour to lecture (Vol. I.), after the enthusiasm and hospitality with which I was there received. It was quite a paralysis of memory, and has pained me much.

14, Burwood Place, London,
May 21, 1846.

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LECTURE VIII.—FUZELI.

THERE is nothing in the progress of the greatest painters or sculptors, from their earliest to their latest life, so essential as a daily and perpetual reference to Nature, in the imitation of everything they use, to convey their thoughts to the spectator.

Whatever may be the sublimity of the conception, whatever may be the terror or beauty of the subject, whatever may be the necessary vigour of the muscular action to convey the passion and the story; whilst men, women, children, and animals, are the instruments of the great painter and sculptor to express their thoughts, they ought never to forget, there is a limit to all human expression and bodily effort, beyond which come grimace, dislocation, and death.

However elevated the great genius, or fertile his imagination, *I repeat*, he should constantly remember, that the beings whom God has organised to exist on this earth, are subject to the laws of matter; and as the wildest and most frenzied fancy is compelled to take

them as his means to develope his meaning, let his genius be immortal, whilst living creatures are his instruments, "In the very tempest, torrent, and whirlwind of his passion, he must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness."

Indeed, the whole of this exquisite advice to the players by Hamlet, applied to our divine art, is incomparable, from one too, Shakspeare, whose imagination at proper seasons was really without limit. "Be not too timid neither," says Hamlet, "suit the *action* to the *figure*, and the *expression* to the *action*," Shakspeare would have said had he been speaking to painters or to sculptors. "With this special observance," continues Hamlet, "that you o'erstep not the modesty of Nature."

This is a lesson to imprint on the earliest mind of the student: and how is this lesson to be learned to perfection, so as to be remembered every morning when he sets his palette, and every night after his day's labour is over, and he muses, and meditates, and invents, and makes his studies for the next? by no other means, be assured, but the daily habit of looking Nature resolutely in her sweet face, shrinking not from her piercing eye, and never neglecting, under any circumstance of perfect practice and long experience, to make his sketch even, without the control of a living and breathing model.

Happy the artist who can conscientiously say, at any period of his life, "Without Nature, I am entirely abroad."

In the uninspired languor of a hired model, you will not always find Nature a substitute for your conceptions: the great thing, as Reynolds says, is to form a *mind*, and when you walk in the fields, or in the streets, when you are in society, or when you are in solitude, "chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy;" when you argue with friends,

or when they argue with you ; when men and children are anxious, active, and eager in talk, or roused to fright and terror, by deaths sudden and unexpected, by fires, floods, explosions, and the people who are suffering, and the people who assist, all shew the passions of their souls, in their faces and movements, unconscious of observation, and irresistible in feeling ; which flash out for a moment, and pass off for ever, at a new emotion : these, these are the times for a painter's mind to profit by, and at last he will get into such a habit of seeing, listening, looking, feeling, and watching, always with reference to his art, that nothing will escape him ; he will observe how far he will be warranted to go, by remembering how far Nature went, in the extremity of passion ; which becomes ever a regulator of extravagance, and a check on an unbridled fancy.

Thus when he begins a great work, he draws on the accumulated collection of daily thought and observation, and supplies, by his intuitive power, what he has never seen, and he never can be extravagant or unnatural, because where Nature has assisted him, it becomes a law of guidance to the simplicity and propriety of what he invents.

Some years since (1812), when I was painting the " Judgment of Solomon," and at the moment was about to begin the mother agonized for fear her child should be cut in two, I was passing Temple Bar, full of the expression I wanted, when right before my own eyes, I saw a blood horse kick an interesting boy, whose mother, a poor woman, by his side, had allowed him, in hopes of some pence, to hold it for a gentleman, and though he was cautioned by the rider, had mounted, was thrown, and killed by that kick on the spot !

I saw the mother rush in agony to her boy, screeching, "My child! my child!" I ran over with others to help her: she turned her face to me screaming in suffocation and hoarseness; she beat me back in raving insanity!—that look haunted me for years;—her lips were lifeless! a red spot was fixed in her cheek! a large tear hung in each lid without dropping! her brows were elevated,—for thought was gone; and in her wild eye, she seemed to see a horror internally, and to see nothing externally! She clasped her hands, and saw nobody before her, when they drew the poor boy away!

As I returned hours after, I heard still, her faint and excruciating screams, from an upper room, "My child! my child!"

Now after doing all a human being could do to help her, what was the effect on my mind of the horror I had witnessed? what was the thought that occurred to my brain, when her glaring look of agony and lacerated affections made me shudder,—this—nor ought I to be reproached for entertaining it—that what I saw, was the very expression I had been meditating! I went home to my model, who was waiting, and painted at once the Mother in Solomon, and transferred to my picture the agony I had seen in life, and the expression I painted brought tears into other eyes besides my own.

This anecdote, without the least exaggeration, will explain what I mean.

A lecture might be written on the art of using the individual model, and the art of retaining and transferring the expressions and actions of life, and a very useful lecture too.

The greatest geniuses on earth, Shakspeare, Raffaele, and Phidias, bowed with awe before the living being. In

all their greatest, in all their grandest, in all their most beautiful conceptions, *they* never overstepped the modesty of Nature,—the basis of all excellence in poetry and art, and no sound genius in poetry and art has ever done so, however wild his imagination, or fervid his waking dreams.

In the long run of the world's experience, these are the landmarks that breast the flood of time.

The extraordinary man, who will be the subject of this lecture,—equally a tribute to his character and his genius, and an exposure of his obstinate defects,—is an illustrious instance, that the most brilliant imagination, in an art the elements of which are laid in an imitation of life, is almost useless in its effect on the taste or improvement of a nation, if it attempt to express its thoughts and fancies by a false imitation of that Nature, which ought to be its constant guide.

Unequaled in his time for perfect originality of conception, unapproached since by the beauty of what may be termed his visions, and the sublime terror of his ideas; yet he never can and never will be held up to the aspiring student, but as a beacon; he never can take his station on the same platform with Shakspeare, Raffaello, and Phidias, and nothing can be more useful than to go into the reason why.

He began art late, after he had been bewitched by the seductions of literature.

When from disgust at being a classical tutor, he turned to art, his imagination had been too much indulged, and had so completely got the upper hand, he felt weary in trying to descend to the elements of imitation: I admit, it must be a struggle, but so is all duty; it is infinitely easier to indulge your evil propensities, than exert your

virtuous ones, not because the tendency to right is not as vigorous as that to wrong, but because the same fair field is never given to resistance as to gratification.

Hard work, dissection, repeated and repeated hours of laborious imitation, are considered at an advanced period of manhood as fitter for a youth; why more fit for a youth than a man in similar predicaments? if a man be as ignorant as a youth, he ought never to be ashamed to take the same methods to conquer it.

Fuzeli, almost ignorant of all the simple elements of design, plunged at once to the highest efforts, and his deficiency of elementary knowledge harassed him, as he richly deserved, the whole of his life.

With a fancy bordering on frenzy, the becoming again a little child (as our Saviour beautifully says) when arrived at man's estate, was an effort of philosophy and a mortification of pride, a humility of spirit and an acknowledgment of error, I regret to say, Fuzeli had not common sense enough to reverence as became him; he found Nature did not come up to the uncontrollable fancy of his own outrageous dreams, and he concluded at once Nature was tame, and unworthy the admiration of a great genius; at the very outset he got into the wrong road, and through the whole of his life he obstinately maintained it was the right one; but every now and then his conscience gave indisputable evidence it was not easy, and that it was his pride, and not his conviction, which induced him to defend his error.

When painters let their imaginations take entirely the reins, before they are perfect in the language of their art, every day's indulgence renders them more helpless and more sophisticating.

Their great delight is perpetual invention, which, being

involuntary, is no trouble; not realizing or identifying one superb thought, not dwelling for years in completing the thought to the highest degree of excellence and perfection; but such men as Fuzeli, as soon as the relish of a new thought is over, fly off to another; content if, in spite of any deficiency of form, or any abomination of colour, or any violence of action, the *thought* be intelligible to themselves, and to their limited perceptions of the moral utility of the art, *that* is always sufficient.

To such temperaments the modest loveliness of Nature becomes a reproof and an annoyance: finding her simplicity an evidence of their own extravagance, they shrink from her with affected contempt and real apprehension:

“ Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before.”

Fuzeli's idea of a standard form was Greek and Phidian, but not being founded on a thorough knowledge of the component parts of man as a machine or a natural object, and being nothing but an idea from a superficial survey, vague and settled on no one principle of life, his representation of that idea ended in extravagance and falsehood.

When first I saw the Elgin marbles,* strange as it may seem, their length of limb and fire of action put me in mind of Fuzeli's general notion of figure; but, considering their simplicity, their beauty, and their truth, nothing could be more totally opposite.

In moments of caprice or temporary irritability, he would defend his style of art, and say it was *above* Nature; but if you took advantage of moments of confidential placidity of temper, he acknowledged his defects.

* 1808.

Style, as I proved to you all in the first lectures, is a result, and not a cause; when you know deeply the component parts of the machine, you know what in its condition is accident, and what is essence; but, if you are not so informed, you may and cannot help mistaking accident for essence, or you may reject essence in idealizing the model before you, and this of course would be not style, but absurdity.

No style of figure can be sound when so based, and to generalize on any other basis than knowledge—a deep scientific knowledge—must end, as Fuzeli's design did, in violence and mistake.

To the superficial, his works had a vast look of anatomical knowledge, because he obtruded offensively the little he knew: there never was a greater mistake, and nobody knew this better than himself, for he had scarcely any anatomical knowledge at all.

I have heard him with great candour express great regret at the sight of dissecting drawings, that he had not deeply pursued the same course; for he had too great an elevation of soul, and too great a love for his art, to defend even his own ignorance when he was honestly convinced of it.

The people of England have been blamed for not relishing Fuzeli's works: this is unjust; Fuzeli, when he first appeared, astonished and attracted, but every year finding his works nothing but modifications of the first they had seen, of course they felt weary of such talented violations of nature.

His original conception of the Night-mare, spread his name over the earth: *he*, the inventor, was paid £30, whilst the engraver of it cleared £600! by the print.*

* From Fuzeli.

So far from blaming the English people for their apathy to Fuzeli in his latter days, so extravagant had he become, it was to their honour and credit they had taste to perceive he deserved it.

The people of Britain are often blamed for not having taste for this style or that. First they are told they have no taste because they perceive the extravagance of the German school; then they have no taste because they abhor the false view of Nature in the French school; but you never find them having these objections to Titian, to Raffaele, or the Greeks. Believe me, to me these are evidences that my countrymen are organized to receive true impressions from Nature, and not false ones; I believe the people and know them to be in advance of the production, and if our statesmen would back their sympathies for great works, we should soon see productions which would put a stop to this calumnious and offensive censure.

Fuzeli, the whole of his life, was the butt of the press: all the critics saw his violence, but all the critics did not or would not see the poetry of his ideas, the beauty of his compositions,—encumbered, I acknowledge, by extravagance or deformity.

His beauties were often wilfully neglected to raise a laugh at his expense. Amongst all classes he was considered the painter of horrors; whereas his genius was essentially one of terror, a very different sentiment.

This is a distinction all students should keep in view: Rembrandt's Sampson, with the Philistines dashing out his eyes with a dirk, and a Saint being impaled, in the Louvre, are subjects of horror and blood; while the Ghost in Hamlet, Lady Macbeth listening before the murder, or Ugolino brooding over his dear children, are subjects of

terror, in which sentiment there is a great deal of pleasurable sympathy.

Not being advanced enough in art to make this distinction is one reason why Fuzeli got a reputation, which legitimately may be called a *bloody* reputation; and such was the horror connected with his name, that I remember perfectly well the day before I was to go to him, an introduction having been prepared by Prince Hoare, a letter from my father concluded in these words: "God speed you with the terrible Fuzeli."

I never had heard his person described, and apprehended, with a sort of mysterious doubt, he was at least as tall as his own Satan, certainly hardly less than seven feet!

Awaking from a night of extraordinary dreaming, the awful morning came. I took my sketch-book and drawings, invoking the protection of my good genius to bring me back alive, and sallied forth to meet the Enchanter in his den!

After an abstracted walk of perpetual musing, on what I should say, how I should look, and what I should do, I found myself before his door in Berners Street,—1805.

I remember taking up the knocker with a nervous energy, but so unconsciously violent, and beyond the usual motion of the hinge, that it absolutely stuck in the air as if bewitched, increasing my mysterious fears; I stared at the knocker, as much as to say, is this fair? when, driving it down with great violence, the servant came to the door as if the house was burning! I stammered out my wishes, and was shewn into a room which did not add to my self-possession, for it was full of Fuzeli's hideous conceptions!—galvanized and spasmodic demons! Satans crossing chaos! witches, malignant

and ugly, brewing their incantations ! Medusa's snaky head ! Paulo and Francesca, Lady Macbeth, and the dreadful Lazar-house ! with its insanities, its diseases, and its pathos, winding up the hideous assembly. Imagine a young man of nineteen, fresh from Devonshire, who had relished and brooded over the works of this wild genius from eight years old ; hour after hour had he dwelled on his sublime conception of Uriel and Satan, as he dived to the earth in many an airy wheel, and now he was actually in his room, and actually heard his footsteps !

Men who are brought up in London have no idea of our freshness of feeling when from the provinces we enter it for the first time, and see and talk to the celebrated men we have heard of, and read of, and seen of, from boys, for years.

At last, whilst I was wondering what metamorphosis I was to undergo, the door slowly opened, and I saw a little hand come slowly round the edge of it, which did not look very gigantic, or belonging to a very powerful figure, and round came a little white-faced lion-headed man, dressed in an old flannel dressing-gown tied by a rope, and the bottom of Mrs. Fuzeli's work-basket on his head for a cap. I was perfectly amazed ! there stood the designer of Satan in many an airy wheel plunging to the earth, and was this the painter himself ? certainly. Not such as I had imagined when enjoying his inventions.

I did not know whether to laugh or cry, but at any rate I felt that I was his match, if he attempted the supernatural !

We stared quietly at each other, and Fuzeli kindly understanding my astonishment and inexperience, asked in the mildest voice for my drawings.

Here my evil genius took the lead, and instead of

showing him my studies from the antique, which I had brought, and had meant to have shewn him, I showed him my sketch-book I did not mean to show him, with a sketch I had made coming along, of a man pushing a sugar-cask into a grocer's shop. Fuzeli seeing my fright, said, by way of encouragement, "At least the fellow does his business with energy."

From that hour commenced a friendship which lasted till his death, though of course my political opposition to the Academy rendered our meetings sometimes rather stormy, and less frequent during the latter part of his life.

Though young men may perhaps have a teacher more attentive in the detail of instruction, yet never again can they have a nobler inspirer, one more cultivated in literature, more elevated in his views, or better acquainted with the history of his art!

Nearly all the students who came in with him are now distinguished men, — Wilkie, Mulready, Etty, Hilton, Collins, Pickersgill, and others; and I attribute it to his plan of never tormenting a student into following an authorized plan, but always giving them fine examples, and leaving each youth to imitate them according to his own genius and perceptions.

In seeking the instructions of eminent men, let it be always remembered, it is their minds which distinguishes them from others; that a few words from such men, at proper periods, are of more value than hourly superintendence from a mere teacher of lines and proportions.

In all Fuzeli's conceptions, he never missed the most striking moment of time,—the great moment of interest in the subject. Though often obscure in his subjects, and the works he selected them from, such as those from the *Niebelungen*, of course imperfectly known in England,

yet there was always the leading moment of interest, that roused a curiosity to know what those savage iron-mailed monsters of lust, revenge, and blood, were about, which disturbed and excited one.

Fuzeli belonged to that class as a genius which considered art and its instruments of so elevated and abstracted a nature, in thought, expression, and form, as to be degraded by any essential detail of life or common humanity.

Had he been a dramatic poet, he would have developed characters by expressions and sentiments so exceedingly heroic as to have little claim of belonging to the species—man.

They would have been very grand, very dignified, very sublime, and very violent, but not one of them would have had that roll of skin under the arm-pit I showed you under the arm-pit of the great god Neptune of the Elgin fragment.

Had Phidias or Raffaele been his instructors in early life, correct habits of thinking, general habits of eternal reference to life, would have so curbed and reined in his frenzied fancies, that, in my opinion, he would have established a school combining idea and truth, such as need not have feared comparison with any other.

At the same time, there must be ever a doubt, because Fuzeli was a German in imagination, and there is a mysticism in that extraordinary people, which poisons the purity of true art, and yet perhaps the world may have missed a great man from the irregularity of his early education!

Had he been trained as all the greatest men were trained in art, he would not have found Nature, as he used to say, *put him out*—an extraordinary expression!—

he would not have found her simplicity a nuisance, or her modesty, even in her extremest actions, insipid; he would not have despised those essential details which link the greatest hero to us all: he would have found all these component parts in the language of imitation necessary to express the wildest flights.

Fuzeli was the reverse of the Phidian school of art and the Shakspearian school of poetry.

The Greek dramatists, and the French, seem, too, as if *above* those exquisite touches of frailty, of truth, and of humanity, as if they were beneath a representation of life in the abstract: they give us faultless monsters which the world never saw, instead of the frail creatures which the world is full of.

There is no relief in those scenes of murder, blood, and grief, and agony, as in Homer, Shakspeare, and life: no Greek tragedian (*Æschylus* might), no French one certainly, would, after such a scene of murder as Duncan's in *Macbeth*, have roused us from our torpid agony by—

“ A loud knocking at the south entry.”

Naturally enough, out comes the porter, roused from his sleep, and in a sarcastic humour, wondering who it can be, sarcastically sneers out—

“ Here's a farmer who has hanged himself in the expectation of plenty.” He opens the gate, and in bursts *Macduff*; who, irritated at being kept so long at the entrance, angrily remonstrates with the porter at the detention.

“ We were carousing till the second cock,” says the porter.

Now, say the French, what a degraded taste, to

bring in a vulgar porter, with his vulgar jests, after the murder of a king by a hero !

I ask, why not ?—did Macbeth tell his servants he was going to murder the king ?—It was clear Macbeth had servants ; that they were down stairs, and not up, is likely, —that they were unaware of what had been going on up stairs is also likely, —that they were annoyed at being disturbed in their sleep (as servants always are) is probable, —then why not indicate the existence of the class which are a component part of a feudal castle ?

Let us inquire what has happened. There has been a battle and a victory ; the king has honoured their master by a visit ; there has been a grand feast ; Macbeth and his lady are supposed to have retired : what do servants do, after their services are dispensed with ? crowd around the fire, amuse themselves in a whisper at the follies and vices of their superiors, and enjoy “ the sweet morsel of midnight ” without the fear of the bell.

Again, Macduff, after the prediction of the witches, had given symptoms of uneasiness and apprehension of Macbeth’s ambition : he was not quiet at leaving the king so entirely at his mercy ; he could not sleep ; he gets up, dresses, and hurries away at dawn of day, and hence the

“ Knocking at the south entry.”

The servants went on carousing till they got tipsy ; they had not long retired to rest, and, buried in the heavy slumber of an over excited brain, were roused when they were not willing to move, and hence the sarcasm of the half sleeping porter ; he feels like a porter, and he talks like one. How would the Greek tragedians or the French have made him talk ? would they have made him indulge

in a fine soliloquy on the uncertainty of all human enjoyments? should he have said with tragic agony,—

“ Thus was Priam rous-ed from his slumbers deep?”

Corneille and Racine (geniuses as they were) would perhaps have done so, but Shakspeare, and Raffaele, and Phidias, would not: *they* did not make their invented characters mere automatons, for the delivery of the author's sentiments; *they* always let their characters explain themselves by thoughts and expressions which belonged to such characters in nature, influenced by circumstances, opportunity, or motive.

That such a class as porters are never met in the highest life, or even in such moments of horror, is beneath reply; or that such a known fact as a porter and a king hardly meeting, or that sentiments of the highest poetry and elevation, and the lowest ribaldry and wit, seldom or perhaps ever occurring under any circumstances together, at the same time, or about the same time, in actual life, is so too. We have all met these contrasts: we have all met Punch and a Funeral, or a Wedding and a Man being carried to an Hospital, crossing each other in the same street; and a proof of the truth of Shakspeare occurred to me of the very nature alluded to, which Sir Walter Scott again and again made me repeat, to his infinite delight,—for no man relished, as his works show, so intensely those Shakspearian bits of nature.

It is rather singular it should have happened at the reading of this very Macbeth by Mrs. Siddons, who, it is well known in her latter days, used to delight society by reading whole plays of Shakspeare during a night.

That was a delight which posterity can never estimate,

and when I heard Macbeth read by her, it is not hyperbolical to declare, I had never heard it read or acted properly before in all my life.

Such was the sublimity of her countenance at all periods of her life, such the intonation of her awful voice, such the depth of her genius, and the truth of her feelings, that I believe in my conscience, Shakspeare himself would have discovered beauties in his own works he had not anticipated, could he by any possible magic have been present at the time.

Before it was all over, being an early man, I went out on the landing-place of her house, in Baker Street to get cool, and was meditating on the sublime things I had heard, when my servant, who was in the hall, which was full of servants, said to Mrs. Siddons' old porter, "Why the old lady keeps it up, doesn't she?"

Alive to the value of such a bit of nature, as the critical opinion of that class on the genius of such a woman, I listened for the reply; when I heard the old porter say,

"Yes! she tunes her pipes as well as ever she did:" at which there was a sort of chuckling triumph among the men.

I only appeal to you all, if this were not a bit of that very nature, that exact mixture of elevation and low life, the sublime and the ridiculous, so constantly met with in life, and so constantly combined in Shakspeare.

"Il n'y a qu'un pas de sublime au ridicule."

Was there, could there, ever be a finer illustration? here was no disguise; here were the real sentiments of uncultivated minds. This miracle of genius was the old lady

who tuned her pipes! and after all, your servants are your only philosophers. Mrs. Siddons was the aged woman on the brink of the grave; the servants saw quietly through all her struggles to keep up her noble fame; we, upstairs, were the imposed on; we saw and trembled before her genius and her power; we forget her mortal in her immortal part; the servants coolly shook their heads, and quietly smiled at the delusion of their masters.

I have often thought, that servants, and porters especially, from the many hours left them for reflection, have a great deal more practical philosophy than ourselves.

After this, who will deny the beauty and truth of Shakspeare, contrasting the tortures of Macbeth, the hero who

“ Unseamed a man from the nave to the chaps,”

with the irritated sarcasms of his porter, when both must have been in the castle at the same time; the one carousing after the fatigues of the great day, and the other murdering the king; each impelled by his own motives.

The roll of skin under the arm-pit of Neptune in the Elgin Marbles, is, on the same principle, applied to our art: Neptune must have had it if he had a skin, and a skin he must have had, if he had a human figure; and how are you to represent a god to human perceptions but by a human form? The principles of poetry, painting, and sculpture, are the same as to the truth and value of these essential details.

Shakspeare, Homer, Raffaele and Phidias, are full of such details; Fuzeli, and his species of genius, considered them as useless and below the ideal; rely on it, the

former are the greatest men in art that ever blessed our sphere, and the world on the whole would be better without the latter.

As a further illustration, remember Lear during his ravings; the fool points at him, and says,—

“ He is a shealed peascod.”

Now, say the idealists, this simile is beneath such a moment. Why?—Men in bitter sorrow are always inclined to jest, and to jest in proportion to the very hopelessness of their condition,—

“ The worst returns to laughter.”

Antony says of his jests, when ruined,—

“ These are the darts sorrow shoots out of the mind.”

The fool was an attendant on kings at this moment, and much later, and a privileged person, selected for his wit, and allowed at all moments to give vent to it: when the fool saw his venerable master and sovereign, whom his love for his friends and children had disinherited, what finer illustration could he give of his gutted condition, than saying he was a peascod cleared of its peas?

We split it open with our finger and thumb, scrape out the peas, and fling away the shell, flapping, useless and gutted; a fit emblem of a king, without crown, without revenue, without liberty, without lands; oh, it is admirably exquisite!

I believe, in my conscience, in one page of Shakspeare, there is more philosophy, more beauty, more thinking,

painting, colour, composition, and nature, than in any three pages of any other poet that ever appeared on earth.

It will not be an uninteresting question in the latter part of this lecture, being devoted to an individual, to take up the accusation of men of genius being superstitious and a *genus irritabile*; as Fuzeli was an irritable man in the opinion of the phlegmatic. The accusation, though in some degree true, is not true if you apply to the temper of any man of genius what more scrupulously belongs to the nature of his brain; which, *primâ facie*, every one will allow to be of a more delicate and sensitive texture than the brains of the greater part of mankind.

Men of genius, too, have been considered superstitious. Shakspeare, Homer, Milton, Wordsworth, Byron, Scott, Keats, according to the common notions, were all superstitious; so are conquerors, Cyrus, Alexander, Napoleon; and even the Duke said at Waterloo—

“The finger of Providence was upon me.”

What right has the run of mankind to consider these sensations of conscious divinity within, as symptoms of the childish weakness of aged apprehension, instead of the real inspirations of divine power?

The greatest men, before they have accomplished what they from childhood predict they will accomplish, have always asserted their belief, of a stirring in their natures, which supported them in calamity, guided them in victory, and urged them onward, whenever they were in solitude and silence!

Did Cyrus do what he believed he was born to do?—Did Columbus?—Alexander?—Napoleon?—Welling-

ton?—Of all men on earth, Socrates was the least likely to be what is called superstitious, yet he believed he was acted on by a spirit.

I do not believe such men are superstitious. But I believe what the world calls so, in them, is really the consequences of their exceeding refinement of construction, which renders them more alive to the existing supernatural, and more sensible of the actual whisperings of the Deity, than the mass of mankind.

With respect to the irritability of genius, the greatest have always been the gentlest—Shakspeare and Newton. The merely irritable are in a lower scale.

No man had more the character of being violent, than Fuzeli; though he was essentially a good-natured man.

You must admit that it is more than likely, that the abstractions of the minds of men of genius are intense.

It is indisputable, that during the time their imaginations predominate, their brain is so alive to the internal pictures of the imagination, that all sensation to external objects is utterly gone. There is no speculation in their eyes; the organs are open, but their sense is shut at such moments. Men of genius are as if mesmerised; it is therefore very likely, if not allowed to wake by degrees, that their nerves are so shaken by noise, by friends calling, children romping, or by servants knocking, that, before the imagination has exhausted itself, to be called to the sensation of daylight is absolute torture.

Such men are not understood, as Burns' wife understood him when he was what she called crooming,*

* See Lockhart's Life.

insensible to all about him but his internal thoughts; they are accused of singularity, affectation, bad temper, insanity, and nobody knows what.

Who suffered more from this view of his grand mind than Byron? Why?—because the people about him were the reverse of his nature.

Scrutinized night and day by a domestic police, haunted, distracted, and driven from one room to another, so that every abstraction was shattered by the valet or the lady's maid, or the butler, or the steward, creeping in to see my lord did no injury to himself!

Unable to endure this, he hired a room to be alone in one of the streets in Piccadilly; here, whilst in the very act of writing the *Siege of Corinth*, without notice or announcement, in bolted two physicians, felt his pulse, looked profound, looked into his eyes, looked at each other, took their leave, and declared in writing, that at present they did not think they were authorized to advise confinement!

Byron sometimes woke in the night, like other people, with a brilliant train of thought, and rose to secure them; this was a bad symptom! Byron loved solitude and silence for the acting of his imaginative power; this was a worse!—sometimes too, he, like other people, fancied himself the hero he was depicting, and talked loudly to himself; this was very near the point, you must admit! He refused money for his works,—the strongest evidence of all: at last, my friends, he went to Greece, devoted his genius, his influence, his fortune, and his person, to rescue the descendants of Aristeides and Leonidas from their oppressors, and died gloriously just before seeing all his immortal wishes realized to the full.

Oh the madman! Bedlam was too good for him! Men of this nature must be managed, and led, not checked and disturbed.

If in their moments of phantasmagoric internal pictures, a servant bolts in to look after the fire, or a cherub child puts in its innocent laughing face, and says, "Papa, mamma wants the *keys*," the shock is dreadful to such brains. Fuzeli at such moments would rave, and away went the household,—Oh, master is mad!—what a violent man he is!—whereas in reality he was the mildest of human beings, if his imagination were allowed—peace! the great secret for women who marry men of genius.

In general literature, what is called polite literature, Fuzeli was highly accomplished.

He perhaps knew as much of Homer as any man,* but he was not a deep classic; he could puzzle Dr. Burney by a question, but he was more puzzled if Dr. Burney questioned him! Porson spoke lightly of his knowledge of Greek, but in comparison with Porson a man might know little and yet know a great deal; a friend once asked him to construe a difficult passage in the chorus in the Agamemnon of Æschylus—he cursed all choruses, and said he never read them!

But his power of acquiring, idiomatically, a living language, was certainly extraordinary; six weeks, he said, was enough for him to speak any language; yet though his tendency to literature gave him in society the power of being very amusing, I think it my duty to caution the young men present, he for an artist allowed literature to take too predominant a part in his practice, and sunk too much the painter in the critic.

* Cowper's Letters.

To be thoroughly versed in the *materiel* of his art was beneath him; he disclaimed the knowledge of brushes, and colours, and grounds, and all those technicalities the great men were so versed in.

Lounging a whole day over Homer may indulge your imagination, but not give power to your hand. This was making a principal of what ought to have been but a subordinate aid, and not the way to acquire the ordinary human means of imitating human life in form and colours.

A man who finds he must descend from his highest flights, to eat, should disdain nothing.

Had Fuzeli drawn to perfection without dissecting; had he coloured with the "red and white which Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on," knowing nothing of grounds; had he touched like Vandyke, knowing little of brushes, or expressed the passions like Raffaele, disdaining to watch human emotions, in such cases such a man would have a right to regard with commiseration the ordinary processes, by which such poor creatures as Raffaele, Titian and Correggio, Rubens, Vandyke, Reynolds and Claude, attained their repute. But alas! we have evidence that his works, though finely conceived, are proofs no man can disdain with impunity a wary, careful, workmanlike investigation of the nature, quality, and character of the materials he is compelled to use, to imitate life—the organ to convey his thoughts to others.

These details your heroic geniuses disdain; not so that species of mind the basis of which is common sense. "I have a good opinion of his talents, (says the Duke in his 10th vol. alluding to a general who had signally failed), but he wants common sense, and I value that more than talents."

Unless imagination be grounded on common sense, as I have said in my first volume, it will be useless.

Depend on it, *Paradise Lost* was not the worse for being written grammatically, or with a good pen; or Wellington's battles fought the worse, but the better, because he took care his men had shoes to march in.

The object of this lecture, and the object of taking up the character and habits of Fuzeli at all into consideration, was to guard the rising student against the dangers and follies of his practice, and the most fatal of all fatal delusions, that genius is enough, and those the Almighty gifts have nothing to do but sit and wait for its calling.

Genius is quite enough, if you have enough of it; but one of the component parts of the greatest men has been a sound understanding.

A sound understanding will tell you, that to sit still and lounge days over Homer and Tasso, instead of rising with the morning star to muse on various subjects for pictures, and be content with musing, are not the most reasonable way to get the power of a painter's hand; and if his hand be nerveless, what claim can he ever have to be considered one?

The mechanical part must be mastered, or how will any man convey his thoughts? how will you be ready when your involuntary conception comes?

Now the extraordinary man to whom I devote this lecture with all my heart, was one of those men so frequent in the German school who had not genius enough.

When Canova was in England in 1815, I asked him after he had visited Fuzeli, what he thought of him? with the discrimination of a great genius, which he undoubtedly was, he made this exquisite hit,—“*Ve ne sono in arte due cose, il fuoco e la fiamma; Raffaello ebbe il*

fuoco,—Fuzeli, la fiamma solamente.” Immortally said ! a lesson to us all.

“ There are two things in art—the fire and the flame ; Raffaelle had the fire, Fuzeli only the flame.”

In his occasional confidences he said he had made a mistake, but it was now too late to repair it ; and that was a worse one.

The Elgin marbles shook him deeply, and first gave him a dawning he was wrong ; he was never entirely easy after ; he tried to sophisticate, but it never succeeded, and he was blinded by foolish flatterers—the bane of distinguished men.

His feeling was indisputably Phidian, but he had mistaken the way to render such a feeling useful to the world.

Reynolds alluded to him, when he talked of artists thinking it was degradation in acknowledging—“ Nature put them out.”

I have heard him repeatedly say it, after trying to use a model : as if Nature must be wrong and Fuzeli right, because *she* was not like *his* imitations of her ! Very modest, certainly !

In thus speaking in censure of a style which from its lazy and indulgent ease has peculiar fascinations for the tendencies of growing youth, and has misled hundreds to their ruin ; yet I should regret if it be supposed I am insensible to his finest conceptions.

His Uriel and Satan—Uriel on a cloud, watching with suspicion Satan who had deceived him, as

“ He throws his steep flight in many an airy wheel,
Nor staid till on Niphates top he lights”—

is sublime, and never was surpassed by anything pro-

duced by Michael Angelo, Raffaele, or Julio Romano, in their highest poetry of mind.

When a boy running from school a print of it caught my eye in my father's shop-window; I stopped and gazed as if enchanted, I drank into my being its poetry with sensations in my brain unfelt before, and never forgotten since.

Again, his Satan starting up in his own fiery likeness was sublime.

His power of conversation was very great and very delightful, but he had no vigour of argument; a very entertaining collection might be made of his sayings.

In all schools of drawing, chalk is rubbed out by bread.

One night, a student gifted with more self-conceit than genius, handed his chalk drawing to Fuzeli with an affected humility, by asking him if he thought it wanted any bread. Fuzeli, perceiving he wanted to be praised, thundered out—"Yeas, gate a loaffe and youse it all."

Reynolds and Burke one night were standing in the plaster-room of the Academy looking at the students; another boy of the same description brought over his drawing to Sir Joshua, saying—"Very spirited, Sir Joshua!" Reynolds, amused, handed it to Burke, who after a minute's reflection what he could say to so high flown a gentleman, echoed his own words, "Very spirited, indeed!"

This word "spirited" has been an *ignis fatuus* to thousands.

Spirit must succeed hard labour, not precede it. Every dashing touch of a great master is a separate thought, to accomplish which in a dashing way hundreds of previous failures and previous deductions have led.

Boys see only the captivating dash, and imitate the end, but shrink from the beginning.

How many men and women of fashion have asked me to teach them to sketch ; how must I begin ?—simply, I have always said, as my pupils begin. Eight hours a day drawing and dissection for two years will do something, but four years will assuredly do more : the appalling look and faint reiteration of, eight hours ! showed the simplicity of their accomplished minds.

The result of this young gentleman's spirited efforts were natural—we don't know his name.

A great characteristic of all the young men who were afterwards distinguished, was that in their youth they were listeners and not talkers when in the presence of older men of genius. I declare to you I am greatly indebted to this habit in early life at present ; and I recommend to all young men never to thwart for the sake of arguing for victory ; when a youth, listen and reflect, and inquire the next time ; by which cautious means, you draw your superior into confidence : this was our plan, and by which means we gained knowledge we might in heat and irritation have lost.

There is hardly now a day passes I do not feel the benefit of contact with Fuzeli's mind ; granting he always overshot the mark, still it was only too far in the right road, and required caution before adoption : with the Greeks and the Cartoons as guides, any young man may be safe in any man's presence, however vicious may be the elder man's theories.

One great quality of Fuzeli was, his accessibility to the humble and the poor student if he had a spark of talent ; no matter what might be his condition of want or necessity, Fuzeli would attend to him with an attention as if he was a boy of rank.

With people of fashion he was not a favourite ; they

were insensible to his merit, and feared his sarcasms; but it was principally his own fault; he could not patiently endure a young dandy of fashion? I ask, why not? I like a young man of fashion and blood; I consider him as a species; I like his manly defiance of a five-barred gate; it is the same bottom which made him defy John, and get us our great Charter; and a charge of cavalry at Waterloo was no more to him than a fox-chase.

Envy is the basis of the affected contempt of all people of fashion; Peter Tomkins says, they are born booted and spurred: granted; but that is no evidence they are born with superior power in their legs to spur with.

Here is visible this fact incontrovertible, that they take their chance for the gifts of the Almighty with the rest of their more humble species for his superlative gifts, whatever may be their external advantages of situation or fortune.

Fuzeli never did, or never could, resist a witty flash, let who would be before him; and as many people were of repute and station in situation and the world, he engendered enemies in every position; if he were being beaten in argument, he cut it short by a rudeness which stopped conversation altogether.

Once an Editor had or was having the best of an argument about Milton, when Fuzeli thundered out, "The fact is, all Editors are scoundrels."

Sir Humphry Davy was decidedly beating Fuzeli in argument at Johnson's* table, when Fuzeli archly said, "What is the use of Chemistry?"—"Why," replied Davy, "more to me than Nature is to you, Mr. Fuzeli." He never spoke another word.

* The bookseller, St. Paul's Church Yard, where used to be assembled regularly the most eminent men of the day.

His inventions were become so extraordinary in latter years, that it was asserted he ate raw suppers. Any one who knew him, will know he had no occasion to indulge indigestion for the purpose of seeing ghosts!

Thus this highly-gifted man can only be held up as a beacon.

No genius can palliate a contempt of Nature; for Fuzeli could have been silenced in a moment if he had been asked what he was doing?—Was he not imitating Nature to the best of his recollection? And if he did not think, on the whole, that as the longer he was absent from her the weaker his impression would grow, he had better have a model, he never denied that the only way to understand the essential of fine form was to know the essential from the defective form; and the only way to discover what was defective, was to ascertain by investigation and daily practice what was the essential to be imitated in painting.

It is all very well to say—"I am an inventor." I reply, how is the world to know that, if you do not understand the language by which your inventions become known? and you never can be esteemed a great artist, however splendid your powers may be of unidentified invention.

These means are called mechanical means, because even dull people can be taught to exercise them to a certain degree; but yet they have their pretensions to genius too, as Reynolds says, and the feeling for a whole denotes a power of mind and of comprehension almost as rare as invention itself.

Had Fuzeli taken the pains to paint his inventions on the basis of the great masters, his name must have risen as the nation improved in taste; but he has no chance,

for as the nation rises in taste, however they may relish his imagination, his powers of execution will be an everlasting bar.

To young men, therefore, he must be held up as a warning; for, inventor as he was of ghosts and fairies, he can never be what is called a sound man; he ought seldom to be looked at till a genius is matured, because youth is so apt to be led astray by what is dazzling, daring, and meretricious.

It is extraordinary what a tendency all young men have to subjects of blood, violence, and murder. Achilles and the Devil certainly take the lead, though Hector now and then appears in a fight where he did not always show to advantage.

The finest conception of a ghost which ever flashed on a painter's imagination, was Fuzeli's, of the Ghost in Hamlet. There it quivered in martial stride, and round its vizored head was a halo of light that seemed sulphureous! one smelt the burning, cindery, suffocation of hell!

The moon shone dimly behind, while the sea seemed roaring as if disturbed by something supernatural! the spirit looked on Hamlet as if it did not see, but felt his presence, and the eye had a light at the bottom like a lion-eye at his feeding.

But yet it was a German ghost, and had more of the fiend than the father; it had nothing to touch human sympathies: combined with the infernal, there was no "countenance more in sorrow than in anger," no sable silvered beard of venerable age.

It was a fierce demoniacal spirit, an iron-clothed fiend, reeking from hell, and his crimes not yet purified for heaven!

In his two Fairy pictures, the only Fairy pictures in

the world, still the Nature was absurd ; your heart longed for truth of imitation, which so far from being incompatible, would actually have doubled the poetry of the conceptions.

In the fanciful and supernatural, these were his greatest works: his Lazar House was a proof of the pathetic, whilst Puck putting a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes, a fair evidence of his talents for mischievous humour.

Fuzeli, Flaxman, and Stothard, were the three legitimate designers of the British school, and yet not one of them was perfect master of the figure.

Flaxman's designs from the Iliad, Odyssey, and Greek tragedians, are his finest works, but when first they appeared, the Continent asserted (as no Briton has any imagination), they were invented by an Italian !

It is extremely hard to say whether some are sublime or ridiculous, but there are groups of Houris, Nymphs, and Nereides, very sweet and vase-like.

As a designer, his works place him as much before Canova, as Canova's power of cutting marble placed Flaxman below him ; since Praxiteles, no man changed marble into flesh like Canova ; no man perhaps ever worked up a single figure as a bit of fleshy execution, equal to this distinguished man.

Though Flaxman in his lectures talks pompously of muscles and construction, he knew in reality not deeply of either, as his anatomical designs prove.

His lectures on the whole, though containing many useful hints, are shallow, and display clear evidence of no very high intellectual power.

It is not surprising that Johnson should estimate a sculptor's power of deduction very lightly, when Nolle-

kens was his friend; and surely these lectures of Flaxman, with conclusions so feebly made, tend rather to confirm than refute Johnson's prejudice.

The value of Fuzeli's and Opie's Lectures, in comparing them to Flaxman's and Barry's, is extraordinary, and the superiority of Reynolds's to all more extraordinary still.

Stothard, as a composer, was sometimes beautiful, but he could not paint any more than Fuzeli, and knew less of the figure than Flaxman: he could not tell a story by expression, yet there was an angelic sweetness in every thing he did.

He seemed to have dreamed of an angel's face in early life, and passed the remainder of his days in trying to combine, in every figure he touched, something of its loveliness.

Peace to Stothard's mild and tender spirit! It was impossible to be in Stothard's company a moment, without feeling he possessed the mind of some ethereal being that was out of place on this dim spot which men call earth.

Never were four men so essentially different as West, Fuzeli, Flaxman, and Stothard.

Fuzeli was undoubtedly the mind of the largest range;—West was an eminent *macchinista* of the second rank;—Flaxman and Stothard were purer designers than either. Barry and Reynolds were before my time, but Johnson said, in Barry's *Adelphi*, "there was a grasp of mind you found no where else;" which was true.

Though Fuzeli had more imagination and conception than Reynolds—though West put things together quicker than either—though Flaxman and Stothard did what Reynolds could not do, and Hogarth invented a style never

thought of before in the world, yet as a great and practical artist, in which all the others were greatly defective, producing occasional fancy pictures of great beauty, and occasional desperate struggles in high art, with great faults, Reynolds is unquestionably the greatest artist of the British school, and the greatest artist in Europe since Rembrandt and Velasquez.

It is impossible for any man in any style to look at a portrait of Sir Joshua without benefit, instruction, and delight.

His broad masculine touch, his glorious gemmy surface, his rich tones, his graceful turn of the head, will be ever a source of instruction to the great artist, let him practice in what style he may.

It was a most interesting speculation to analyze one's feelings as I have done after visiting these men in one day. I always left Fuzeli delighted by his wit, his sarcasm, his knowledge; and often annoyed by his indelicacy, his scepticism, and his malice. In West, one saw a man of sound sense struggling through the imperfections of education.* Stothard always impressed you as if he was trying to forget the evils of earth; and Flaxman pompously insinuated he hoped he was on the road to Heaven! But what I carried from Fuzeli made deeper impressions, and was found in the end more beneficial.

These are names which will always do honour to British art, though I question if either can be held up so confidently as an example to the student, even with all his defects, as Sir Joshua Reynolds. Reynolds, Hogarth,

* I said to Canova, "Au moins il compose assez bien."—"Non, monsieur, il ne compose pas, il met des figures en groupes," he replied. 1815.

Wilkie, and Wilson, the student may safely study, and Gainsborough too. These men built their means of conveying their thoughts on the sound practical principles of the Flemish and the Italians.

When one reflects that so great a man as Apelles discovered, after perpetual experiment, ivory black, and Vandyke so often used a brown that it is named after him; when one considers the extreme nicety of feeling, of organ, and of eye, to keep one's tints pure; of the jealous care of Rubens, of Titian, and Vandyke, and then think of Fuzeli's abomination of a palette, of his self-conceit in undervaluing its importance, of his sweeping filthy oil with his left hand round it, and sweeping off a bit of every tint upon it—when one saw him plaster up a woman's shoulder, and say “Be Gode, that's very like Corregio!” one did not know if to cry or laugh.

I now conclude: I hope I have impressed you all with this leading truth, *viz.* In an imitative art, the knowledge of *how* to imitate is as important almost as how to invent, and the man who affects to despise the *means* to imitate, does not see farther than the great men before him, but not half so far.

It cannot be too often repeated in the British school, that none of the elements of design must be neglected; if you cannot draw, or colour, or invent, or light and shadow, or compose, you are not a painter, and never will be entitled to the name.

The great men before us did not obtain their fame by such conceited folly; and if such folly be not held up to eternal reprobation, it is a disease which will return like any other epidemical tendency, till entirely branded out of the art.

Had Henry Fuzeli begun art at an earlier period, had he been guided by a great master, without impairing the vigour of his mind, he would have been prevented rioting so often as he did in hideous distortion, or mistaking as he often did violence for strength; grimace for expression; or blood and horror for the true sublime.

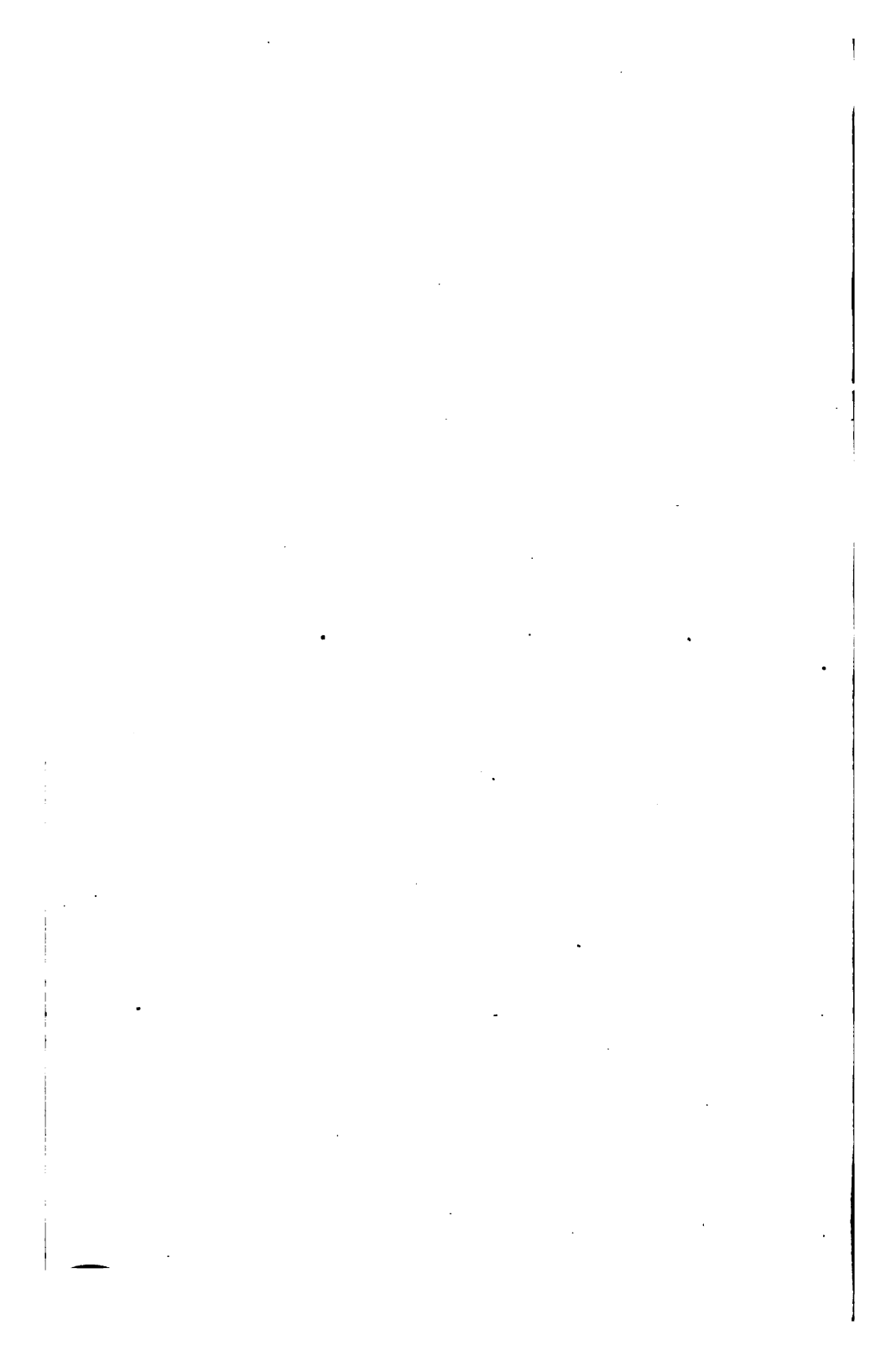
Let his distorted style be a warning to the shallow and the vain; and let no man, however highly he may be endowed, conceive that his faint and feeble impressions of Nature, when she is not before his eyes, is sufficient to retain an accurate resemblance of her, or that the way to attain superior eminence in an art the basis of which is laid in imitation of life, is to paint without a daily and hourly recurrence to her beauties.

LECTURE IX.

WILKIE.

Delivered October 22, 1841,

AT THE LONDON MECHANICS' INSTITUTION.



LECTURE IX.—WILKIE.

“ Or the dead nothing but what is *good*,” says the proverb.

Of the dead nothing but what is true, say I, as well as of the living, which, though not *so tender* a sentiment as the former, is much more likely to be useful and sound.

When a man of great genius is taken from this world at any period of his life, an intellectual power is missed.

If he die in youth, mankind lament him for what he might have done had his Creator spared him longer ;—if in the maturity of his powers, he is bewailed in sorrow at being taken from us when his powers were coming to imaginal perfection ; and if it please God to let him totter on to extreme old age to the grave, with “ honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,” blessing and protecting him, still he is missed by parents as an example of successful virtue, by his companions as the friend of their younger days, and by his admirers as the genius whose inventions have relieved their solitude and enlarged their understanding.

His mind and his conversation were features in private life ; his works a characteristic attraction in public

view ; and a man of great genius, if it be united with virtue, is scarcely ever taken from his fellow creatures without being bitterly regretted, especially as in the case of this extraordinary man we intend to honour ; if his death be sudden and touching, and when in the common course of men's career it might reasonably have been hoped that many years of virtuous application, many years of ardent pursuit and prolific invention, might have been the lot of one, who though not so vigorous in mind at last as at first, yet had never weakened his great powers of understanding by debauchery, or debased them by any excess except of virtuous application ; it is at such a period of sympathy and regret, that all disputes which in the natural course of things have arisen between friends are forgotten or regretted, all weaknesses or even vices are overlooked ; when there exists in every human heart a tendency to cling with a melancholy tenacity of memory more to what was unkind in your own conduct towards your friend, than what was unkind in him towards you : hence the proverb, " Of the dead nothing but what is good," which must have originated from the tenderest sympathy at such separations, when it is felt as a duty to keep their memory unstained with fault, though at the risk of depriving the lost friend of that great bond of human attachment, viz.—Frailty ;—for depend on it, exactly in proportion as we are told a man had no faults, do we feel disinclined to bear the praise of his virtues.

To me, the loss of one of the dearest and earliest friends of my youth is never to be compensated ; something is gone that was always near, something sound in genius, sterling in sense, cautious in conduct, and pious in habit ; something where there was no delusion, no

imposture, no pretence. A security for art whilst it existed, an honour to the nation abroad and at home, and in spite of his own horror at the very word, an unadulterated and distinguished reformer in the British school, in his own natural and beautiful department.

Friendships are not always founded on similarity of tastes or feelings in men, any more than in women; perhaps, on the whole, men get attached in proportion as their minds are dissimilar, except in religion and morals, and then I will defy attachment to begin or proceed, if disagreement exist a moment.

Our friendship began in a dispute on art,—we passed life in argument, and ended it in a sarcasm; and now he is gone I feel his loss as if it could never be replaced to me, as it never can: his patience, his bearing and forbearing, his modesty, his kindness of heart in spite of his chilling manners, his hospitality, his original power of thought, his hatred of idleness, his domestic virtues, added to his great and deserved fame, rendered Wilkie a friend not to be met with twice in the life of man, and forces the imagination to dwell with fondness on the conception of again finding his spirit cleansed of its mortalities, where separation will be impossible.

Poor Sir David Wilkie! had he listened to my warnings, he might been with us still.

I knew the nature of his strength, from having travelled with him in France, and foresaw an Eastern climate, with his tendencies, would certainly be fatal.

I recommended books to him on the diseases of the East, but he seemed quite insensible to any danger, and replied he had suffered more in Ireland than he could suffer again; forgetting that the climate of Ireland produced the necessary reaction of the frame, which enabled

the individual to resist the inconveniences, and that his escape from inconveniences in a healthy climate was no evidence that he could escape from disease in Syria or Egypt; and such was my intense conviction of his danger, that when I read the account of his death—his distressing death—I read it as something, however painful, that was neither extraordinary nor unreasonable.

Though his latter practice cannot be held up as an example to students, yet his mind, his influence, his love of art, his good-nature when they wanted advice, his readiness to give it when asked, and his detestation of all flattery, were of essential benefit to young men, and must be missed by the students greatly.

Though there were no aspirations of high calling, he was a safe guide; there was about him what Madame de Stael says of England,—“une atmosphère morale,” which, however shivering at times, was sure to bring a boy to his senses; and that is the first step.

With a future generation, no man will stand higher in British art, in the domestic drama of art, than Wilkie; and as every thing connected with so great a genius, from the moment of his birth to the moment of his death, must be deeply interesting, I have taken the necessary pains from the most authentic sources to ascertain every thing connected with his infancy and childhood which I did not know; and as no man knew so much of him after he came to London, for the greater part of his life, as myself, after he burst into repute, I have had no occasion to go elsewhere for truth.

From the gentleman of the Scotch church who at present occupies the parsonage-house of Wilkie's father, I obtained the certificate of his birth, and all that I shall relate of his infancy and childhood. He was an intimate

friend of Sir David Wilkie, was attached to him as a man, and adores his memory as an artist.*

“In 1785, December 4th, the Rev. David Wilkie and Isabel Litester had a son baptized David, born 18th of November.

“Extracted from the parish register of Cults, this 23rd of June 1841, by James Simpson, Sess. Clerk.”

Sir David Wilkie was still-born, and it was some time before he gave any symptoms of life.

His father was a talented and most respectable clergyman, and was 38 years minister at Cults. He came from Mid-Lothian, and was nephew to Dr. Wilkie, Professor of Logic in the University of St. Andrews, who wrote an Epic Poem called the *Epigoniad*.

Wilkie's father had also, I have heard him say, great mathematical and calculating talents, and he was the author of a valuable treatise on Interest and Annuities, with an illustration of the Widow's Scheme in the Church of Scotland, which William Pitt read and spoke well of.†

It is thus evident talent existed in the breed. In the statistical account of the parish, by one of the father's successors, it is said—“that the young painter shewed at an early period of his life his predominant predilection for art.”

Even the jeers of his brothers and companions did not deter him when on the very verge of infancy from embracing every opportunity of exhibiting his natural tastes and prepossessions; and all the aversion of father and mother and grandfather to his following, what they con-

* The Rev. James Anderson, Cults.

† From Wilkie.

sidered, as usual, an idle and unprofitable pursuit, only served to verify, as it always does, the adage of Horace—

“ *Naturam expellas, furcâ tamen usque recurret.*”

His father's successor in the ministry has mentioned that when he first came to Cults he found the walls of the nursery completely covered with eyes, noses, hands, and other parts of the human body, boldly executed, not with crayon, but with the charred end of a stick; on this gentleman's return to the Manor House after a short excursion, the house painter as usual had obliterated the whole of the interesting relics.*

Dr. Gillespie, professor of humanity at St. Andrews, says, when Wilkie was only five years old, a lady of rank and station† paid his mother a visit at the Manor House: she took particular notice of little David, who was a little keen-looking, bare-headed, and bare-footed urchin.

This lady had a very large nose, and as soon as all the ceremonies of taking leave and curteysing were over, wee Davie was not to be found for some time, till at last they discovered him drawing her nose on the wall, with his usual brush, viz. a burnt stick: he ran to his mother shouting, “ The lady's nose! the lady's nose!”

The parents and the grandfather often shook their heads at little David, and one day as he was drawing, the old man said:—“ Ah, my mon Davie, it will be a

* At Plympton, 1809, Wilkie and I found a sketch by Sir Joshua, in ink, against the wainscot, done with his finger when he was a boy: the house-painter here again was the culprit, but permit me to say, it is not the house-painter who deserves censure, but the house occupier, who ought to be more alive to the value of such relics.

† Lady Gowrie.

long time ere daubing wie a stick wooll do any thing for thee."

But grandpapa was mistaken—as grandfathers sometimes are, and as the sequel will show.

It is impossible to say when he first began to paint, because when a great painter dies a dozen people are ready to make oath they have his very first production.

But it is undoubted, when a mere youth, he painted a sign for an ale-house, at Kettle, the adjoining parish to Cults, of a Boy and White Horse, where it hung for some years till purchased by the Procurator Fiscal in Cupar.

Another of his early productions, before he went to Edinburgh, was a composition of a poor family sitting in tattered clothes, the father smoking a pipe by the fire-side, and his daughter, a buxom Scotch lassie, bringing water from a well in an earthen vessel: it is now possessed by a widow lady in St. Andrews.

All these earliest productions of a great genius should be engraved, and it is well worth the consideration of any enterprising man in London to make a point of doing so.

Such was Wilkie's propensity to draw what he saw, that though the son of a clergyman, and more accustomed than others to have religion continually impressed on his youthful mind, he could not help at church, in the intervals of prayer, filling up the blank pages of Psalm-books with sketches of any peculiar characters amongst his father's parishioners, who went to his father in a body, and complained of Master Davie.

The great object of David's humour was Thomas Young, the beadle of the church, who had a great propensity to doze almost as soon as the sermon began. In all the varieties of nodding, and trying hard to prevent it;

of half closing his glimmering eyes, and making desperate hems occasionally, to impress on the little boys he was wide awake; in all the gradations from the first inclination to drop, to the last awful dip of his head on his brawny breast; his snuffling and awful snore, his waking horror at his own noise, and his solemn struggles to keep his dignity,—Wilkie caught, and sketched in his prayer-book.

We have now got through the infancy and boyhood of this great artist, and I hope the anecdotes related, which are from his aunt, his mother, and his father's friends, and his own oldest friend, the Rev. James Anderson, the clergyman at Cults—I hope, I say, they prove beyond dispute that a genius for design is something more than a mind of large general powers accidentally determined to a particular pursuit, but that they prove in addition to the general capacity, there is a peculiar susceptibility to the impression of objects on the senses to the brain which propels to imitation by line and colour, in spite of father, grandfather, and friends.

Wilkie's father and friends, seeing it would be cruel to attempt crushing, if not hopeless, his predominant passion, considered it more sensible to regulate than extinguish the passion, and with great judgment David was sent to Edinburgh, and placed in that admirable school, then kept by Graham, 1802.

Graham might have been a very sensible and shrewd man—a good teacher, but not a great genius. But Wilkie always spoke of him with respect and affection.

In 1802, David Wilkie came to Edinburgh, and lodged in Nicholson-street. Shortly after he had entered Graham's school, he sent over to his parents this opposite drawing of a foot as a specimen of his advancement; his good and



Sister E.R.H.

venerable father thus pleased, showed the drawing to many members of his congregation, who, after examining the foot again and again, declared, Wilkie told me, it was more like a *fish* than any thing else!

As a curiosity I requested the foot, 1814, and he gave it to me, amidst the authentications of his mother and sister to the truth of the anecdote related.

Whilst he was at Graham's school, he contended for the prize in historical painting, and his picture of the murder of Macduff's wife and children must now be in existence; there was an originality, I have heard, in the picture, unlike any of the other students'.

Wilkie, from the straitened income of his good father, had been early taught the value of money—a very important acquisition in early life; he was therefore very soon compelled to exercise his profession as a means of subsistence, to relieve his father; and he began about 1803 and 1804, to paint portraits of his friends; the whole of these remain, and such was his prudence and economy, that by his own honest exertions alone he saved money enough by 1805 to come to London.

During the period he was a student at Graham's, he painted that wonderful production of Pitlassie Fair, not much known in London; but which was exhibited with his other works in 1812, in Pall Mall.

He began this work, from the sheer impulses of his own great genius, after seeing the Fair, and it is composed in a style of knowledge and science that argues most extraordinary diligence in study, to have discovered so early the hidden principles of composition worthy of a higher style, and without having ever seen a picture by Teniers at that time in all his life, as he told me. Prints from Raffaele he must have seen, as he acknowledged, and

from Raffaele he undoubtedly imbibed those early hidden secrets of arrangement which distinguished every thing he did.

To shew you the power of innate genius over difficulties, when he began this picture he had not been able to save money enough to buy an easel, but like a great mind, his ingenuity at once contrived an admirable substitute; he used to pull out the under drawer of an old chest in his upper room, and resting his picture on the projecting drawer, lean it against the body, and paint: thus he began and proceeded with that wonderful production.

Lough, in a back garret of a green-grocer's shop, modelling his superb Milo—and another artist paying his models by his coats, without meat, without candles, without money, finishing a well-known work—and Wilkie with no easel, painting his immortal Fair, are three instances of what is meant by the power of gifted genius!

How many are there who would have put off painting till they had got the finest blues, the most mahogany of easels, the most silken of brushes, the most immaculate of oils, and the most translucent of lights—heaven help their innate power! When any difficulty, however apparently insurmountable, stops invention, there is not much to stop. But when invention goes on in starvation, in want, without help, without employment, let the possessor be sure he is the man, and will have his day at last, let what will oppress him.

From his early letters at this period, one thing will strike the young student, and I hope it will impress him, viz. his modesty, his docility, and his willingness to do any thing he was employed to do, provided it kept him out of debt and out of obligation.

In the first letter I possess, to an old Scotch friend,

Thomas Macdonald, dated September, 11, 1804, he writes :—

“I did three miniatures whilst in the north, two of which I have with me, and I request you will send over two glasses for them : I was in Aberdeen when in the north, and there is but one of our art in it, a miniature painter; but from what I could see of his doing, I could form but a very poor opinion of him.

“I made a shift to get a piece of ivory and glass and a case there, which was all of these commodities that remained in the town.

* * * * *

“I have begun again at the Fair, and I do not think I will return to Edinburgh till I have done it.

“My friends advise me not to go to London till the spring, which I suppose is very wholesome advice, and it is probable I shall follow it.”

In a second letter, Jan. 29, 1805, to the same friend, he begs him to send him three pennyworth of flake white, and one pennyworth of ivory black.

His Christmas bill at his colourman's could not have been very large.

In the third and last letter of this interesting period, dated 17th March, 1805, he begs that canvas and colour may be sent over, for, says he,—

“I assure you I am getting into extensive business, and am covering a great deal of canvas in the country, for, in addition to what you send, the carrier brings me great pieces of it every week ; and there is one advantage

attends me, that is, I am well paid, and I believe I will raise as much money as will keep me in *London for some time.*

“ Yours sincerely,

“ DAVID WILKIE.”

Shortly after this, having accumulated the sum he wanted to come to London, he sailed from Leith; and I have often heard him express his delight as he entered the Thames, at the superb and rolling volumes of a London sky.

When Wilkie came to town, it was during the Exhibition of 1805. The schools of the Academy were broken up; Jackson and myself had been admitted students in March. I was then in Devonshire, working very hard; and Jackson in town. But, in July, the schools again opened; and I received a letter from Jackson, at Plymouth, saying,—“ Make haste back; there is a queer, tall, pale, keen-looking Scotchman come into the Academy to draw.—N. B. There is something in him! he is called WILKIE.”

I set off immediately, hoping, in God, this keen-looking Scotchman at least was not going to be an Historical painter.

At that period of life young men are very fond of writing fine, endless, sentimental, tremendous letters. Fuzeli had said to me,—“ You talk well; write me.” Puffed up with this distinction, I wrote him a fine letter, four sides of cant, sentiment, and profundity. He wrote me a very short, affectionate answer, and put at the bottom as a—“ P. S. To write long, and at the same time

entertaining, is *given to few*." Of course, I took the hint, and never bored our old keeper with four sides of solemn sentiment again.

Well, the next day I hurried away to the Academy: Jackson was delighted to see me, and so were others, and they all told me there was certainly something peculiar in this new student. Jackson said he drew too square; another said his style was vulgar. "What does Fuzeli say?" said I. Fuzeli said, "Dere is something in him." I was rather uneasy all night, for Jackson said he had done something from Macbeth, which all agreed must be a picture in high art.

The next day I went as usual, when, in about an hour after we were all drawing, in came David Wilkie: he was tall, pale, quiet, with a wonderful eye, short nose, and vulgar humorous mouth, and a look of great piercing energy of investigation.

In the course of the morning, he began behind me to get into some argument in a whisper, of which he was always very fond, and after a little, I am proud to say, he got up and quietly looked over me; he then sat down, and I got up, and looked over him: however, I am delighted to say, he moved first.

The next day we got into a fierce dispute, in which neither gave in, and we went away and dined together.

He used to dine at an ordinary in Poland Street, where a great many Frenchmen assembled: here he got that old man with glasses, reading the paper to himself, in the Village Politicians.

By the time the vacation commenced, the habit of dining together, drawing together, and arguing, had generated a sort of necessity to be together, which insensibly grew upon us.

When the Academy closed, Wilkie came up to me, and said, in the broadest Scotch—"Whar d'ye stay?" and invited me to breakfast. I went to No. 8, Norton Street, knocked at his ground-room door, and a voice said—"Come in." In I walked, and to my utter astonishment, instead of a breakfast, there sat Sir David, "in puris naturalibus," drawing himself in the glass! "Good heavens!" said I, "where am I to breakfast?" Without the slightest apology for this position, he replied, with the greatest simplicity, "Its copital practice, let me tell you: jist tak a walk." I took my leave and walked till he was ready.

At this first meeting he shewed me his picture of the Fair: the colour was bad, but the groups exquisite. But I was so full of Raffaele, I had a sort of contempt for a young man so devoting himself: the fact was, I did not know enough of art to see its great value. I had a very different opinion when I did.

Though Wilkie drew at the Academy with great power, there was a smart touchy style, peculiar to himself, and not fit to be put into the hands of a student for high art. It did well with him, was a part of himself, but could not be ventured on by any other without risk of manner.

Wilkie brought to London a letter to Mr. Greville, a relation of a noble lord (Lord Mansfield), and, through Mr. Greville, Lord Mansfield called and gave him the commission for the Village Politicians, his first important work here.

Of all the students of the Academy at that time, and the whole cluster have since become celebrated men, none became so extremely intimate as Jackson, Wilkie, and myself.

Jackson's eye for colour was exquisite; I considered it the purist eye since Reynolds. Jackson was born at

Whitby, and Lord Mulgrave hearing he drew heads in pencil, had him up to sketch the family : here his simplicity and talents, and his readiness to oblige every body, soon got him friends. Jackson had never painted. Sir George Beaumont, who was there, advised him to copy Sir Joshua's George Coleman. Jackson had no colours or canvas. Some canvas was got and some house-painters' white lead, with a coarse brush or two. Sir George, whom you could not please more than by such a pursuit, got Indian red from the burnt alum of Lord Mulgrave's alum-works, yellow ochre and Vandyke brown, in the woods, and soot from the chimney made a capital black. With these materials Jackson set to work and made a very fine copy.

Unluckily for Jackson, Lord Mulgrave took him into his pay, as a patron, instead of making him work and paying him for what he did,—the only true patronage. And, when this amiable creature of talent found the necessities of life supplied, his energy left him, and he became so insufferably idle, that no old gossip of a country village was more ready to listen, to chatter, to stroll, to wander, to gape, and do nothing for days.

He had painted a picture at Mulgrave of Lady Mulgrave and the Honourable Mrs. Augustus Phipps. The time was approaching for the Exhibition, and Jackson was going on at the Castle as usual, when Lord Mulgrave, in a very angry mood, sent him to see the picture packed, as there was no time to be lost.

After a few minutes, Lord Mulgrave told me, he thought, "Gad, I must look after him ; he will be sure to be doing what he ought not." Out went Lord Mulgrave, and, as he was going down stairs to see if Jackson was superintending the packing, the picture, on passing the

staircase window, the first thing he perceived was Jackson, with his coat off, hard at work playing at battledore and shuttlecock with his Lordship's aid-de-camp.

Lord Mulgrave, in a great passion, went to the aid-de-camp, and asked him, how he could think of taking an artist from his duties in this way?

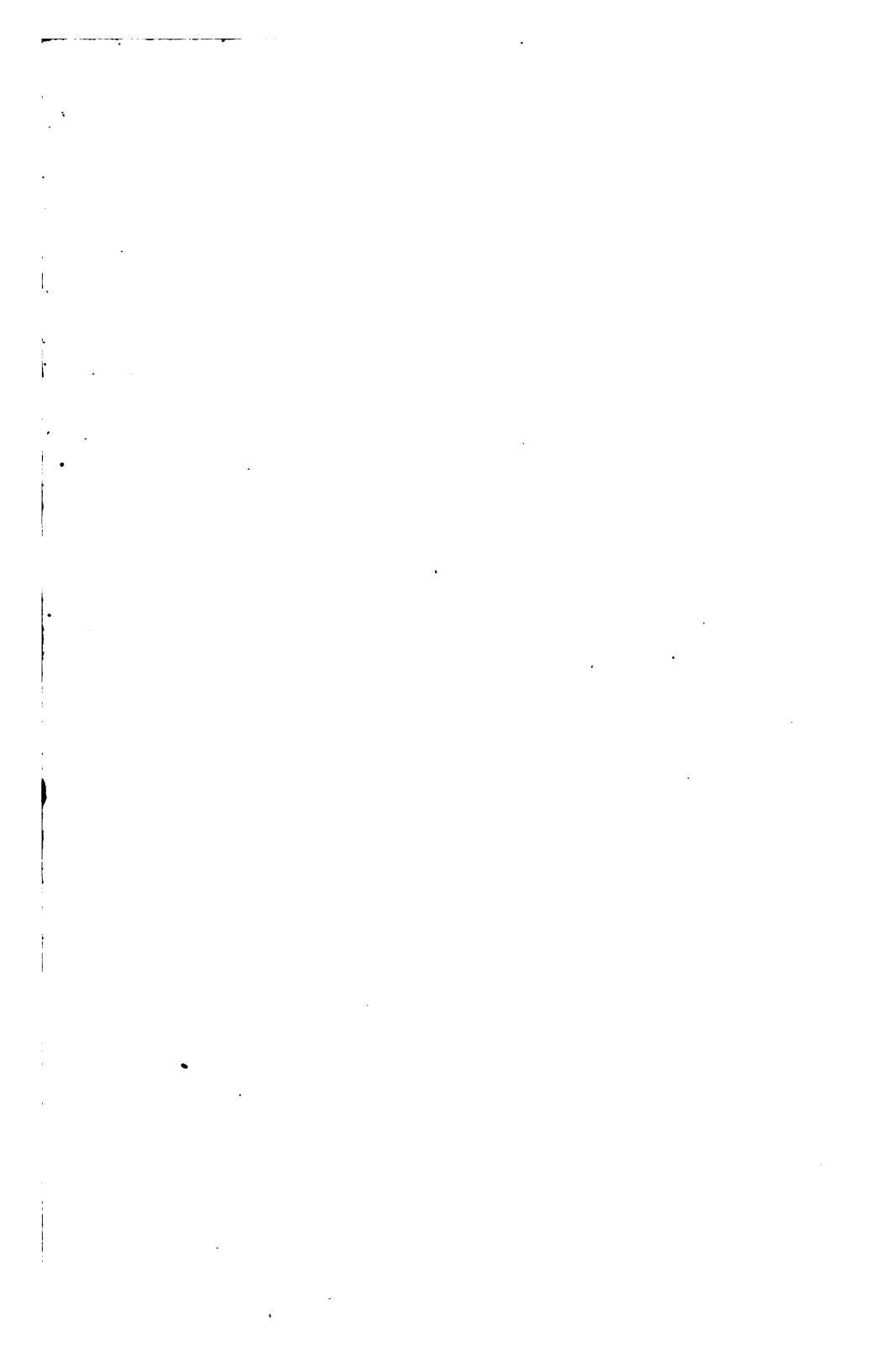
"Me, my Lord," said the aid-de-camp, "why Jackson came and asked me to play!"

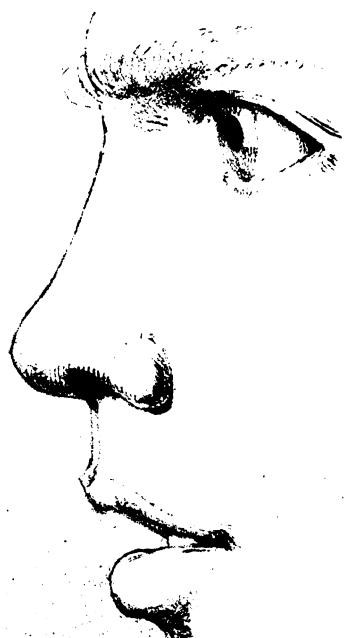
This was an epitome of Jackson's nature: too indolent to be envious, too good-natured to care about his own interest, his great happiness was to make every body happy about him: exactly as he became to like Wilkie and myself, in that proportion he thought we deserved Mulgrave's patronage as well as himself.

He spoke of us both to Lord Mulgrave with his usual simplicity, and Lord Mulgrave said he was so delighted with his total absence of selfishness, that though he had resolved, on finding independence had made him idle, to take away his income, he could not find it in his heart to try the effect. Lord Mulgrave used to say Jackson was a person with whom he never could be angry.

Thus Wilkie, Jackson, and myself, became three inseparable companions—drew together, dined together, and talked together, and we became attached in proportion to our intense distinctions of character.

Wilkie, highly gifted, diligent, modest, humble, timid, quiet, submissive, full of humour, and original thought, obliged to get his own living, and docile, of course, as well as pursue his art;—Jackson, amiable, idle, good-natured, talented, with exquisite feeling for colour, and alive only to its beauties, with £200 a year; and I, full of Plutarch and fury, ambitious, believing I had nothing





like arguing with some apprehension he will get the worst of it.

to do but express my will, and that all the world would hail me as a blessing!—you may imagine the scenes which took place. Jackson was the philosopher, Wilkie the good christian, and I the reckless soldier: in all our disputes, sword in hand, I was ready to storm any fortress, however impregnable; reckless of myself—reckless of my friends.

The scenes with three young men of such opposite natures were worthy of notice. Wilkie and I were generally the disputants; and Jackson, very coolly, when we got into a passion, used to take out his book and sketch us both. (I made the sketch attached to this lecture when he was arguing with Jackson.)

At this time Sir David Wilkie was the most jovial and hospitable man I ever met; poor as he was, he shared his meal with us, and if we were all very merry after hard work, he used to take out a little kit, and scrape a Highland reel, and dance himself, whilst we clapped our hands, or joined in with roars of laughter. We worked intensely; and these scenes generally took place after Academy hours.

Wilkie had come *fresh* from his hearty, honest country, SCOTLAND,—

“ The land of mounntai and of flood,”

And had not had time to get rid of the native hospitality of his glorious country, by the responsibility of great repute, or the timidity of a courtier's life. However, he had now received at the latter part of 1805, or the beginning of 1806, a commission, the first he ever received in England, but not the first he had ever received at all,

because he had received from a humble fellow-student, at Graham's, an order to paint this very Village Politician, which he did, and was paid what he asked (10 guineas) by his humble friend, and which picture (the previous one to Lord Mansfield's) is now in possession of a friend amongst us.*

Wilkie devoted himself to this order (Lord Mansfield's) with his usual ardour. Jackson, with his superior knowledge of art to me, told me it was exquisite; I confess I did not see it, I thought it low; it began to make a stir; and one evening, Jackson was sent by Lord Mulgrave after dinner to bring it down to Harley Street. Wilkie was out; and the next morning, Lord Mulgrave and Sir George both called, saw its exquisite merit, each gave him a commission, and Lord Mulgrave bought at once a little picture, for fifteen guineas, of an old man going to shave. An invitation to dinner followed, and behold, our wee mon Davie was at once in high life, with two commissions, and two pictures sold in spite of grandpapa's awful predictions, that "daubing wi' a stick would do little for him."

The simplicity of his natural manners, his original thinking, his broad Scotch, and his extraordinary genius, made a great impression. One day after dinner, Jackson told me, Lord Mulgrave complained of the want of drawing amongst the portrait painters, and instanced a whole length of himself, where the eminent painter, that morning, from being unable to draw, had put in three arms sticking out of one shoulder, not being able to fix on the right one. While every body was gravely lamenting

* Dr. Darling, of Russell Square.

this, Wilkie had been reflecting to himself, and before a brilliant party, inwardly ejaculated to himself, as if commiserating his unhappy situation,—

“ Pure mon ! pure mon ! ”

The whole company burst into a roar of laughter, and this joke of the “ *new man* ” lasted a whole season, and was his very first in high life.

This great success was to us glorious : we three felt it, as if it reflected honour on our friendships, and we hailed Wilkie with unadulterated feelings.

When the picture was done, Jackson told me he had the greatest difficulty to persuade Wilkie to send it for exhibition ; however it went, and, on the private day, Angerstein called the attention of the Prince Regent to it. This was noticed in a Sunday paper, (the News, 1806,) wherein it was said a young Scotsman, of the name of Wilkie, had a wonderful work.

You remember in a previous lecture I told you what took place, which may as well, for connection sake, be retold here.

I hurried away and met Jackson ; we both called on Wilkie, who was at breakfast. I said, “ Wilkie, my boy, your name is in the paper ! ” “ Is it really ? ” I then read it aloud ; and we all three took hands and danced furiously round the table.

His wonder, at the enthusiasm of the people, was not to be described ; and, when his reputation was at its *acme*, his good father wrote him from Scotland on the instability of such applause, and begged him to come back and attend to his business.

Since the death of Sir David Wilkie, I have been shewn, in a monthly publication, the most shocking untruth about the purchaser of this work.

It is there asserted that it was bought at an auction for forty guineas by Lord Mansfield, and that Sir David afterwards attempted to exact an additional sum. Good heavens! if there be a pitiable and contemptible wretch in nature, it is a poor, penniless, literary hack, with relics of the principle of higher hopes, condemned against his aching conscience, *to lie* for the sake of his *bread*, or to slake the gaping thirst of his unprincipled employers, for every thing new, however slanderous, and every thing heartless, if it have only the relish of a falsehood! Surely, the sacred delicacies of private friendship may with approbation be laid aside at such a moment, and *facts* stated, which only *I* can state, because my advice was asked, during the whole dispute.

When the picture of the Village Politicians was doing, or nearly done, his noble employer called, and said,—“What am I to pay for this picture?” Sir David Wilkie replied, with his usual fright at offending,—He hoped his Lordship would not think fifteen guineas too much. His noble employer replied, he did not know, he thought it a *large* price, and begged him to consult his friends.

Wilkie did, and all decidedly said it was totally inadequate. When the picture began to make a noise, his noble employer called again, and asked for pen and ink, and Wilkie said,—“What is your Lordship going to do?”—“Oh!” said he, “I am going to give you a cheque for the money.”

“Oh! my Lord,” replied the artist, “you told me to

consult my friends, I have done so, and they think it too little,"—

"Ah! but"—replied his noble employer,—“It was a bargain.”

"No!"—replied the painter,—“How could that be? because you told me to consult my friends.”

His Lordship retired rather displeased. In the meantime, out came the picture. Wilkie burst into repute;—hundreds would have been given him for the picture,—and friends on both sides became frightened. Lord Mulgrave interfered, and by his advice Wilkie called on his Lordship, and said,—“Upon your honour, my Lord, did you consider the 15 guineas a bargain?”—“Upon my honour,” said his Lordship, “I did.” “Then,” replied Wilkie, “the picture is yours.” His Lordship then gave him a cheque for 30 guineas.

These are the facts, and nothing but the facts, and there was a great outcry about it at the time. But, I must say, I think unjustly.

Every young man beginning the world, as we all well know, considers himself fortunate to get a commission from a nobleman; if he display talent, it brings him at once into connections, and into a style of life and manners which through his whole professional career he always feels the value of.

Is this nothing? Suppose a nobleman, not a purchaser of pictures, is induced by his brother, or relation, to give a commission he does not want, merely to help an unknown youth from Scotland,—he does it, he is no judge of pictures, he is not disposed to pay a high price; and knowing nothing of whether he will have a bad or a good work, the commission is given. Because the work turns out an extraordinary production, which is a part of the

chance, is he to be pounced upon at once for a large sum, when he from his habits would not have had a picture at all, if such were the expectations? I say no; and no man has a right to exact it.

The extraordinary thing was, that the noble Lord should say 15 guineas was a *large* price! but even this might be want of knowledge; if *I*, a professional student, did not at first see the value of the picture, surely a nobleman might be excused.

The most delicate part of a student's life is that period when, just beginning, he is anxious for employment at any price; but let him ever, when by any patron's kindness the employment is given, be also on the alert, to make the most of the opportunity, if by the opportunity his genius is brought before the public.

Whatever the engagement be, let it be honourably kept on both sides; a student has no right to say, my Lord, this picture is worth more than I asked, when I did not know my talent. The nobleman is right in saying, what did you promise to do, before you discovered your genius, or I either? Add what you like to the next attempt, now you know your station, but what you engaged to do when you did not,—do;—and I shall expect it.

Both on patrons' and painters' sides, let engagements be sacred, and disputes would never arise.

The composition of the Politicians is beautiful as a study; the same repetition of line, the same arrangement and balance of groups, the same perspicuity, as Raffaele; the same shadow and repose, the same emptiness and quantities, flatness and projection, as in all the greatest works of the greatest masters: the students of any style can study this picture with instruction and benefit.

His next work, the Blind Fiddler, done after great idleness, generated by eternal visiting after his great burst on the town, was painted in the summer, 1806.

It was reported Sir George Beaumont meant to give him 25 guineas only, but in a letter to me from Whithead's, dated September 9, 1806, Wilkie says :—

“ Sir George Beaumont is to allow me 50 guineas for my picture, if I am satisfied with it ; he says he never intended it to be 25 guineas, but only mentioned that sum at the time to Jackson, as being the lowest that he should give.

“ I think his offer a very liberal one, and I think you will be of the same opinion.”

He had 30 guineas for the Politician ; 50 guineas for the Cut Finger ; at first, for the Card Players, 50 guineas ; but when the Duke of Gloucester, in his delight, gave him a second order for 50 guineas, Wilkie expressed so much fright, that in going home with Sir F. Bourgeois, he explained to Sir Francis it was impossible to live with such prices: this being represented to the Duke, he withdrew the second commission, and sent Wilkie 100 guineas more than the first.

The Duchess subsequently sold this picture to Mr. Bredel for 500 guineas.

For the Rent Day, he had 150 guineas ; 150 guineas for the Alfred. The first important price he had was Angerstein's,* viz. 800 guineas; and the highest price he ever got was £1200 for the Chelsea Pensioners, from the Duke of Wellington.

We have now brought this distinguished man from the moment of his birth, still-born as he was, to his first burst

* Now in the National Gallery.

on the world, in obscurity and struggle, through all the gradations of infancy, childhood, boyhood, youth, and manhood ; we must now follow him to his romantic death, which has encircled his name with a halo of romantic interest it will never lose in European art.

The disputes between patrons and painters lead to a very important question of great interest and of great consequence to the young student in his beginning and progress through life, viz.—how far it is his duty to submit to injustice from his superiors in station and in age, if they be unjust, and how far caprice should be opposed.

Wilkie's principle from the commencement, with a species of instinct which whispered to him the danger of the reverse conduct, was *absolute submission* to any injustice, any dishonour, or any ill treatment, or any caprice, from his patrons or his elders.

Wilkie's principle was *submission* ; mine was *resistance*. Wilkie got into the palace of his sovereign, and I got into his prison.

Wilkie's principle was the principle of Sir Joshua : in Sir Joshua's early life he painted Lord Barrington's brother, who had a disease in his neck, and held his head on one side. Sir Joshua, though a most delicate flatterer of deformity, like Apelles kept his head a little on one side ; Lord Barrington came and said,—“ What have you done, sir? you have made my brother look as if he had been hanged ! ”—Reynolds, a young man, explained the reason. His Lordship shook his cane over Reynolds' head, and thundered out “ Do you dare to contradict me ? ”

Insulted, Sir Joshua consulted Burke and Johnson, who both said—“ *Bear it* : if you challenge him, you will offend the whole aristocracy, on whom you depend.”

Reynolds did bear it; so would Wilkie have done: but I would not. Yet, my young friends, to bear and forbear is the duty of a Christian; and the precepts of Christianity, as they are the best precepts with regard to your fate hereafter, so they are the best policy for your worldly fortune here, though there is a point beyond which, is unmanly submission, and that point I think both Reynolds and Wilkie passed.

The great object of every student should be to keep his mind calm and his hand at work, and not suffer either to be interrupted by trifles.

However high his views, or noble his aspirations, more injury may accrue by trying to bring a nobleman to a sense of injustice, and more time be lost, than would paint another work, which would bring a patron to his senses, by the collateral influence of the artist's increasing fame.

Wilkie's father was an admirable man; he brought him up with a horror of debt, and a horror of idleness, which never left him. Once, when running about looking at the masons who were repairing his father's house, his father put him on a mason's apron, and to keep him doing something persuaded him to help the masons, was a very pretty amusement; thus making his innocent mind believe it was only play, when it was generating a love of employment, which never left him during life.

This apprehension of doing nothing was very strong the whole of his life: "Come, jist be doing," was a common expression, when Jackson was putting his hands in his pockets and longing for a chat, and I was blazing away for a day at the Cartoons; in short, such was Wilkie's premature caution, premature propriety, and premature worldly knowledge, that Jackson and myself considered

him a sort of father; nor did I ever lose that feeling altogether as long as he lived.

Jackson's idleness became now so hideously apparent, and the consequences so likely to be fatal, that Lord Mulgrave resolved, though with great pain, to stop his income at once, which we thought was cruel, though it proved to be decidedly right; for Jackson, as if startled from a dream, instantly changed, flew to his studies as if in a fright, and was in a few months entirely an altered man.

To this prompt decision of Lord Mulgrave, Jackson owed entirely his future fame, his happiness, and his employment; and died with the best wishes, and in close affection with the whole Mulgrave family.

Lord Mulgrave was not wrong to take away the cause of his idleness; but he was wrong to bestow it: during the preparatory studies, every student requires support, that his whole mind may be directed to acquire the rudiments of his art, but when once he is master of them and begins to paint, commission and not salary is the true stimulant. To bestow a fortune at once on a man of Jackson's origin was sure to be ruin, as it proved.

How singular it is, that young men of genius often lose the necessary application to develop it, if all anxieties as to the means of existence are removed; and how inconsistent men are often proved to be, who, having helped a great genius like Wilkie into public repute, should the moment he is firmly fixed in public estimation become envious of the very reputation they were so instrumental in creating.

The enormous reputation of the Blind Fiddler was too much for the leading and older artists to bear. Bad passions were evidently rising up amongst them; though

Wilkie interfered with none, yet there was a longing desire for a rival, to divide public favour, or at least the veterans were eager to put any body up if they could only push Wilkie down.

As if to gratify this envious and unworthy appetite, suddenly was brought to town the production of a man of considerable talent, which in ordinary times would hardly have made an impression, yet appearing at the very moment in the style of Wilkie, was hailed by high and low with enthusiasm, as likely to level the young Scotsman. Noble design!—worthy occupation!—glorious object! And who was this young man there seemed such a relish to prostrate—to wound—to hurt—to mortify—to ruin?—Wilkie!—the most innocent—the most diligent—the most virtuous—the most awfully submissive youth to authority in the profession! whose success had given *éclat* to the Institution, and increased its income.

“ Oh the blessing of constitute authority in art, science, or literature, where genius is the object ! ”

I opposed myself to this torrent of infamous injustice at once. I saw through it instantly; I urged Lord Mulgrave to oppose it, as well as Sir George; I convinced them of the mean motive, for Fuzeli, with whom Wilkie could not interfere, said to me, in a half crouching, cringing, fiendish whisper—“ What does Sir George say ? ” knowing his appetite for a new genius. Wilkie, in an abject fright, affected not to see it, but his lip quivered and his eye sparkled as he spoke.

By placing both pictures on a level in the Exhibition, the public of course were completely taken in, and saw no difference between the wretched inferiority of the one, and the masterly sound art of the other; but the blow

was struck, the fame was divided, and each petty-minded miserable rival felt the delightful consciousness, impotent as he knew himself to be, that Nature had left him at least a poison-bag and a fang for one whose only crime was his indisputable genius and his spotless character.

The year following, the other man was pushed to his utmost stretch, and when the pictures were sent in, Wilkie was told his own was so unworthy of himself, he had better not let it remain, as he must be beaten in the contest. He came to me as usual in his frights; I pointed out to him the baseness of the intrigue,—he went away almost promising to keep it in, and stand the fight,—lost his courage the moment I was not by his side,—drew out his picture, and left the Council in an ecstasy of affected concern for poor Wilkie, who was afraid of the public judgment.

The next day people of fashion heard, of course, that poor Wilkie was so *fallen off*, he had taken away his picture! And the very men who had been guilty of this paltry proceeding, with that well-known affection which poets, painters, musicians, and surgeons, feel for each other, chimed in with touching expressions of sorrow and regret; and, under pretence of alleviating the mortification of Wilkie, advised the Prince Regent, first to buy the man's picture, and then to give Wilkie an order to paint a companion to it, the same size and the same shape as the picture of this pretended rival.

I date my disgust at the mean passions of the Art from this moment. It was shocking, it was degrading, to witness the eager affectation at being wonderstruck at what was but second-rate: it was painful to see the secret sparklings that Wilkie had got a rival at last!—it was infamous to hear of the callings about on the

patrons of the white-haired and aged President, to come and take a *private* peep, and share his rapturous affection. The ecstasy, the fears, the hopes, the prophecies, that Wilkie would be done for, are not to be expressed, or done justice to now, after so many years, though I witnessed all.

Till this moment Wilkie had borne up, but this malignant manœuvre brought down his mind, and then his health, to the earth! He tried to smile off his bitter mortification; he tried the usual submissive principle when in the presence of his dear associates, but it would not do; he had sacrificed his independence; he had bowed his head, and bent the knee, and licked the feet of the great Baal; and instead of sympathy, and affection, and gratitude, he had, as the monster was sure of his abject humbleness, been spat on—kicked—prostrated—broken in health—distracted in spirit—jeered at—mocked at—pointed at—laughed at—stamped on.—Oh, the blessing of constituted authorities in Art! And oh, the blessed reward they generally bestow for submission! Yet hard as it may be to bear, my young friends, be assured, after all, submission is better than resistance; though not for me, and let me press on you an admirable axiom of Burke's, viz.—“*that there is hardly a point of pride, through life, which is not injurious;*” though submission never sweetens the venom of envy, or renders impotence generous.

I was attached to Wilkie at that time beyond expression; and violent and sanguine in all my affections, I felt the indignities heaped on him as if on myself.

One evening I called, as I used generally to do, to cheer him up in his dreadful condition, when all were alarmed for his life, and there was danger in his state; I came softly into his room, and never shall I forget his

languid despair. He was lying stretched out on the sofa, with the prayer-book in his hand; his head leaned back to the utmost stretch of his neck, his whole nature seemed exhausted, sinking, and hopeless! He knew he had done his duty—he knew he was innocent of all crime—he had been told death was not improbable, and he appeared as if he had taken another, and a terrible view of his species; and yet never did the noble independence of his mind, as to pecuniary obligation, shew itself more vigorously. Angerstein, believing he must be in want, as he was, offered him an advance on his commission, and though in danger of life, and in comparative want, he detested so strongly receiving any money which he might never live to pay, that he faintly but firmly declined it.

The man who retaliates an injury, depend on it, does not feel it so deeply as he who silently endures it. The man who avenges is more influenced by his imagination than by his reason or his heart; but if the heart be pierced to its recesses, circulation stagnates, the brain becomes dull, for it has not blood enough, whereas the fancy of the injury likely to accrue is the guide of the other: the head, by its rapid reply to the imagination, redoubles the pulsations of the brain, and a convulsion of thought and action is the result; and this was the relative character of Wilkie and his friend.

His health got worse and worse; his feebleness was melancholy to behold. Sir George and Lady Beaumont took him to Dunmow, and treated him like a son; by their kindness he returned refreshed, but shattered to pieces; nor did he paint (except a game-keeper of Sir George's while at Dunmow), till he removed to Manor Terrace, Chelsea, where beginning for half an hour a day, and then leaving off for three days, he got the beautiful

picture of the Village Festival, now in Trafalgar Square, completed.

Some years after, I happened to call on one of those venerable admirers of this period of his life, but who joined in the hue and cry : he saw me coming, and opened the door himself : with pious humility and holy joy he took both my hands, and welcomed me with delight. "How do you do, Mr. Hayden ? how do you do ? walk in, walk in : sit down, sir, sit down.—Well, sir, after so long, how are you getting on ?" "Pretty well, sir." "And how does your friend Mr. Wilkie do ?" "Why, sir, he is still delicate." "Ah ! sir, he is a *great* genius, and an *excellent* young man : yet, Mr. Haydon, I don't wonder at his health, for (whispering and crouching to my ear) that *mi-ni-a-ture* painting of his is very trying ; for between you and I, (lowering his voice,) it is—BUT—miniature painting ! Hem ! Not that I mean to—eh—. Will you walk into my studio ?" (raising his voice). In we walked. "There, sir, is my last work." "And pray sir," said I, "who is this for ?" "Why, sir, for Lord Egremount" (mont). "And pray, sir," said he, "what are you about ?" (anticipating by his sparkling eyes I had nothing to do). "Why, sir, *I* am painting a commission for Lord Egremount." (Drawing up his deformed intelligence)—"You !—Mr. Haydon,—you painting a commission for Lord Egremount !" "Yes, sir." "Ah ! sir,—(heaving a deep sigh, and looking with ineffable contempt, whilst he half turned his back)—Lord Egremount is a very CHARITABLE man !" I took my leave ; but he did not open the door for me the second time.

Such were the men at whose mercy Reynolds, Barry, and Strange, had been, and Wilkie and I then were.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my firm conviction,

Wilkie's mind and body never recovered their former power after this dreadful shock, to the day of his dreadful death.

He never painted after as he did before. Though his Chelsea Pensioners, his Distraint for Rent, his Cellini, and his Knox, are excellent productions, yet his genuine works,—the pure produce of a brain in its strength, fresh from the hands of his Creator,—are, the Politicians, the Blind Fiddler, the Rent Day, the Fair, and perhaps, the Card Players. All his efforts afterwards were the consequences of various schemes or various struggles to keep alive or regain the popularity he was losing; and by no means to be taken as specimens of his own honest conviction that he was honestly doing what he was best fitted to do.

Now and then, after his illness, he seemed sinking in thought, and one evening he acknowledged he felt so, and his great object would now be to secure a competence.

His forbearing and Christian nature always tried to soothe my ferocity and disgust when I alluded to his condition and the treatment which had induced it, and with all his persuasion he endeavoured to prevent the explosion he foresaw. The year after I tried to get into the Academy, to aid and back my friend, and being hurled from the door with more insult than Wilkie, without having ever given, any more than him, the slightest cause of offence, restraint was any longer out of the question, and in 1812 I made my *début* as a writer, without knowing a single rule of composition, pouring out my thoughts in one whole night, impelled by a hatred of injustice, and a conviction of the fatal mistake nations make in allowing the existence of constituted bodies in the Arts, which, bearing a semblance to the authorities by which a great

people are governed without their responsibility, use the power collaterally to oppress those they are founded to assist.

This is a question of European interest, to which France, England, and Germany, are getting more alive every day.

This furious and unanswerable attack gave a different tone to our feelings as friends for the rest of our lives.

From the gentleness of his nature, Wilkie foresaw and dreaded the consequences of being suspected to be a secret ally, and such was his abject fright, he refused to walk with me in the streets; and so completely did he overdo his abuse and disapprobation, at the tables of the nobility and to the Academicians, that they absolutely despised his timidity, if he were sincere, and his hypocrisy if he were not.

Every excuse is to be made—he was naturally timid: if he feared to resent injury to himself, it could hardly be expected he would defend a friend at the risk of his interest; though the only error of his friend was an excess of sympathy for his (Wilkie's) own ill-treatment.

Before Wilkie had recovered himself quite, came domestic calamities of so afflicting a nature as scarcely to be ventured in a novel as probable: more broken in health than ever, it was now he resolved to make those long tours more for the sake of changing the scene than advancing his art, though apparently his art was his object alone.

However necessary these journeys may be to a painter in high art, not only were they not necessary to him, for promoting the greater development of his genius, but they entirely disturbed the fragments of what were left of former power.

He was not in a fit state to benefit by the Prophets of

Michael Angelo; he was not in a fit state to be much improved by the splendid colour of the Venetians, or the execution of Velasquez in Spain: the result was pernicious in the extreme. His beautiful Scotch simplicity, his fine original Scotch character of Scotch peasantry, with their prudence, their acuteness, their fearless bearing, their pride, and their deep sensibility to piety, marriage, and love, he gave up, as if unfit for the circle he moved in, and came back a negation in art, despising the very power which was his peculiar gift from his God.

His hand unaccustomed to mighty spaces—his eye plunging from microscopic execution to the style required for 50 or 100 feet; the knowledge necessary to touch with unerring certainty the leading points of things that atmosphere may complete, he was without; and he floundered in a senseless mass of light and shadow—daubed when he tried the execution of Velasquez, smudged when he ventured on the tone of Titian, and in portraits the size of life, whether woman or man, with one or two exceptions, left nearly all perfections to lament.

Like all eminent men, he was engulfed in a crowd of toadies, who persuaded him that my honest remarks proceeded from *envy* of *his* promise in high art. ME envy a man who did not know, and could not draw, the abstract beauty of a naked foot!

Often have I left his painting-room in latter days, in sadness and in sorrow at the base adulations, the interested flattery, the miserable delusions, in which I had found him.

Ah! Wilkie, Wilkie! when that miserable of all miserable pictures, Sir David Baird, was nearly done, I called, I ventured to suggest, but was stopped by a crowd of

toadies, who swore it combined the drawing of the Roman with the colour of the Venetian schools. I slyly looked at Wilkie's face, and his acute head. *Its acuteness was gone*; and instead of the vigorous look of his youthful days, a simpering, silly, acquiescing love of the pap with which he was being fed, had lifted his brow, taken away the fire of his eye, and had given his face a helpless air of feeble delight at the sugar he was sucking down with such infantile complacency.

Of all his latter flatterers, no one did him so much injury as one artist I have in my eye, who gained his heart by perpetual praise of all he did; and helped to blind his perception to the truth, which his misfortunes following so rapidly on his successes had materially debilitated.

When, in 1806, he burst into prodigious fame, it was hardly possible for any mind, not peculiarly religious, to help overrating its station and its real powers.

To start from a long, struggling, obscure youth, into the blaze of notoriety and applause,—to get from eight-penny ordinaries, herded with literary poverty, and poverty of every description—enduring filthy table-cloths—hideous knives and forks—perspiring waiters—and sodden meat,—to the elegant and gorgeous glittering tables of the great, graced with the most exquisite and accomplished women, the greatest statesmen, and the highest rank, was an advance very likely to shake a stronger humility than David Wilkie's.

It was therefore not at all wonderful, as Opie remarked to me, that an alteration was certainly visible in his air.

There is a disposition in high life to relish the scenes of a class with whom they never associate; on the same principle that kings have loved the lowest ribaldry as a

relief to the ceremony of their position. Wilkie painted what the nobility relished and understood. High art they did not understand as they are beginning to do now; and it was not to be wondered at that because David Wilkie had got such repute in a style they comprehended, he should believe himself they were right, when they flattered him with a notion he could be equally great in any style he tried.

At this period Sir David talked with great contempt of the Royal Academy; that they were more indebted to him than he was to them; that he would never ask a vote, he had sworn before and forgotten when the time came. I have heard these sentiments applauded at the nobility's tables when we were together, and consequently David Wilkie began to believe he was destined by Nature and circumstances to be the great painter of the eighteenth century, in all styles.

This was the secret of all those abortive and restless struggles of his latter life: he speechified every where to fit himself for President,—he painted full-sized portraits to be Court Painter,—he frequented Court that he might always be in the eye of those who had rank to bestow.

There was no harm in all this; it is the fair policy of any man; but it took Wilkie's mind entirely off what was its legitimate exercise.

Instead of going to Court, the elegances and graces of which his rustic manners rendered him utterly unfit for, he should have braved the rustic vigour of his own glorious Highlands;—instead of languishing to be Court Painter, he should have gloried in putting forth in perfection all the racy character of his own native peasantry;—instead of speechifying at public dinners in ruffles and sword, he should have trudged with wallet and mawl-

stick from Johnny Groat's to the Tweed, and if he had had the patriotic grandeur of Burns' sublime mind, he would have done so; but he had not, and he was punished accordingly; and though I think constituted authorities in art the bane of European genius, and that the dignity of genius was insulted by their foundation, yet it is but justice to assert my conviction that never did any body of men show greater sagacity, than in refusing Wilkie to be at their head, at the risk of offending their King. They had witnessed with what cowardice he had shrunk from me at a crisis of my life, and they despised the abuse he had poured on the head of his ardent friend, to ingratiate himself with them.

It was not from disrespect to his talents, which were indisputable; it was not from doubt of his virtues, which every body knew. It was from a just apprehensive instinct, that he had no *moral courage* where the great were concerned.

Jackson had the same feeling, and voted as his conscience dictated—viz. against him.

Though it was to be regretted to see the highest genius was unfit for the highest place, the independence of a body of men required the decision; and Wilkie was properly rewarded for his vain folly, his abject submission, and his weak hopes.

It was curious to observe the nature of his mind under all its various phases; though by nature cautious and sagacious, and the least likely of all men to be affected by delusions of any description, yet no man was more liable than he to annual mental eccentricities of the most intense deception to the external sense, for such was the vigour of his brain, that whatever got hold of it, grasped

it with such tenacity, that his perceptions became subject to its control externally.

One season he declared nothing was like Prussian blue, and he saw Prussian blue in every thing. Sir George, Wilkie, and myself, were poring over and enjoying the exquisite brown tones of the late Duke of Sutherland's Ostade, of a man and woman at the door of a cottage. "I wonder how he gets that delicious brown tone," said Sir George. Wilkie looked through the picture, and after a minute, replied, "*Really*, I see Prussian blue!" With all Sir George's breeding, he could not command himself.

The next season he furiously argued that the only way to get the tone of Titian was to mix *white* with asphaltum in a glaze.

When I was painting Eucles* he called. After a fierce argument at this new invention, "Take the palette," said I; "my head of Eucles is hard—*do as you like*." Down he sat, with the gravest deliberation, and muddling white and asphaltum, dabbled the whole head over, darkened the darks—then got up—looked at it with the greatest complacency, and said—"There now! that's just the tone Titian got: just go over the whole picture like that, and you will be astonished."

I attended him to the door, lifting up my hands and eyes, and oiled out the abomination over my flesh the next minute.

The year after, he declared *likeness* was not necessary in portraits; and declared people ought to be contented with a *conventional* likeness. What he meant, heaven knows! but this you might be assured of, he was always

* Won by Newman Smith, in a raffle, for 500 guineas.

ready to argue in favour of any principle that suited the convenience of David Wilkie: he did not succeed in likeness, therefore likeness was no use.

At the public meeting so honourable to his distinguished memory, and so honourable to all classes, Lord Mahon said he was free from envy: before his Lordship, and with very young men, where collision was impossible, he might conceal that passion; but Wilkie had rather a tendency to consider public notice a monopoly of his own; he did not quite like the repute of Davy, he rather undervalued Kean, he fiercely denied at first the genius of E. Landseer. I am not quite sure I have not seen symptoms of uneasiness at the enthusiasm for Sir Walter; and if permitted, he had a very ingenious way of proving that my occasional successes were no successes after all.

Once I remember a ludicrous instance in 1811, when the great comet was making a great stir, and nothing else in the season was thought of. I happened to say, "Why what a noise the comet is making!" He got into a down-right passion, as if the fame of the comet was an impertinent intrusion; and replied that the people must have a *bee* in their head every spring. Now, no man living had had *so many bees* as Sir David. I had known him six-and-thirty years, and every spring he had a new one!

More or less all of us are liable *to bees*, but poor dear Sir David's buzzed louder and lasted longer than any man's I ever knew.

Not only are the most distinguished individuals, the most eminent bodies, and the greatest nations, liable to annual bees in the brain, but it may be asserted not to be far from the truth, to declare there is scarcely a man, woman, child, or animal, which has not occasionally a sting.

The curious thing is, neither nations nor individuals are ever brought to their reason by any process of deduction; but recover solely the perception of their *last* error, by the overwhelming impression of their *next*.

As an artist, Wilkie will be a teacher and an example for ever.

Exactly as I knew more of Raffaele, I esteemed Wilkie's works.

His great characteristics were composition, and the mild playful humour in the drama of domestic life.

The first time we ever saw the Elgin Marbles we went together; he gave extraordinary evidence of his instinct for humour.

To any man of education, of course, to see for the first time the works Plato had admired and Socrates beheld, were enough to crowd the mind with endless associations.

As we came out into Piccadilly, Wilkie said, "I have been thinking of a capital subject; viz. Boys playing with a garden engine, and squirting water at their companions, inside a green-house, who are defying and laughing at them, with their noses and mouths squeezed flat against the glass."

He kept provoking me all up Piccadilly, by laughing and disturbing the poetry of my thoughts.

Such was this great artist as painter, and as man; in art he never reached the surface, the genuine touch, or colour of the Dutch school; but in power of mind, in expression of thought, distinction of character, and telling a story, and in beauty of composition, he greatly surpassed it.

I do not think he had a fine eye for colour; he drew well enough for his style, but as a designer the size of life he was weakly deficient. His composition is perfection;

there, the youth may consider him infallible ; it was the composition of Raffaele in a coarser style.

My not seeing the beauty of his works at first was entire ignorance : as my knowledge increased, my admiration went with it ; exactly as I understood Raffaele, I understood the beauty of Wilkie's art.

Of his latter attempts, Knox is the finest ; his Lord Kelly, in Scotland, and Duke, at Merchant-Taylors', are his most able portraits : he painted one landscape, and touched animals with exquisite truth.

As a painter, he was the founder of our domestic school ; and the soundness of his first practice, his careful study of Nature, and his having models for every thing, may, without exaggeration, be said to have influenced the advance of every part of the art.

Great as his genius was, his intellectual perception was not rapid, nor highly imaginative ; he provoked one sometimes by his slowness in perceiving the point of a good thing. His love of art was a passion ; his industry great ; his communications frank and fearless ; he had no secrets in art, but told all he discovered, as if he wished, as he did, to benefit all.

Find as many faults as you can—discover more weaknesses than any other human creature ever possessed—censure his occasional envies—lament his slavish submission to the world, at the expense of the best feelings of his nature—abominate his chilling manners, and his horror at being discovered to know poverty and sorrow—still no man ever knew him long without being attached. Whilst abroad, his great pleasure was to write to his friends ; and amongst all his friends, no man had more of his respect and esteem than Sir Robert Peel, and to no man are esteem and affection more justly conceded

than to Sir Robert Peel when thoroughly known. One of the last letters he ever wrote to him, was from Jerusalem, and thinking it would add interest to my Lecture on one he so much regarded, he has permitted me to copy it for you.

Copy of a Letter from SIR DAVID WILKIE to SIR ROBERT PEEL,
1841.

JERUSALEM, *March* 18, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR,

While every moment of your valuable time is occupied with important public affairs, an interruption like this may seem unwarranted from so humble a person as myself, but remembering your indulgence to me in a former absence from home, and feeling that no journey can ever present again such objects of thought as those that now surround me, I venture to force myself upon you, as upon one endowed with every faculty to relish and appreciate, what with all my eyes I feel so feebly qualified to do justice to.

Trusting that, with yourself, this will find Lady Peel and Miss Peel in their usual good health, I cannot help fancying how they would be pleased with the reminiscences here presented; those realities of the past, the pious Roman Empress, Helena, has done so much to recal and to identify, and which in my progress hither, ladies of all nations I have found desirous, could the journey be made, to witness and to contemplate. Still, if female enthusiasm should approve or encourage, it is to others who have honoured me with their friendship, and to none more near than to yourself, I should explain, why

with pressing occupations at home, and without a pursuit of that elevation to demand such a process of study, I should yet mount the staff and the scollop-shell for such a peregrination.

It is a fancy or belief that the art of our time, and of our British people, may require it, that has induced me to undertake this journey. It is to see, to inquire, and to judge, not whether I can, but whether those who are younger, or with far higher attainments and power, may not be in future required, in the advance and spread of our knowledge, to refer at once to the localities of Scripture events, when the great work is to be essayed of representing Scripture history.

Great as the assistance (I might say instruction) which the art of painting has derived from the illustration of Christianity, and great as the talent and genius have been this high work of art has called into being, yet it is remarkable that none of the great painters, to whom the world has hitherto looked for the visible appearance of Scripture scenes and feelings, have ever visited the Holy Land!

What we therefore so much admire in the great masters, must be taken from their own idea, or from secondary information : in this, though some approach far nearer than others,—Paul Veronese, Titian, Giorgione, and Sebastian del Piombo, all Venetians, possessing by common immediate intercourse with the Levant, and giving in their works a nearer versimilitude to an Eastern people,—yet who is there that cannot imagine that such minds as Raffaele or Lionardo da Vinci, great as they are, might not have derived a help, had they dwelled and studied in the same land which Moses and the Prophets, the Evangelists and the Apostles, have so powerfully and

graphically described ; and which they would have described in vain to the conviction of their readers, but as witnesses and participators in the events which form the subjects of their sacred writings ?

In my journey hitherto, desirous of taking a review in Germany of some of the great works of Rubens and Rembrandt, I was deeply interested at Munich by the great and meritorious efforts now making by the native painters of that city.

These I believe you have seen, and I doubt not with high admiration at the genius of the artists, and the munificence of the sovereign, who has called them forth. To you, therefore, I speak with deference, and under correction ; but as they profess to revive a style of art which has formerly existed, whether Byzantium or early Italian, I have doubts, however fitted to their purpose, if such a style would either suit the disposition of the English painter, or awaken the attention of the English public ; to whom it would be like bringing forward the Talmud and Fathers of the Church, instead of the Pentateuch and the New Testament.

The time is now come when our supply in the walk of art must be done from the fountain-head. The facility of travelling, as well as recent public events, favour our pursuits in this sacred quarter : and I am highly grateful at being permitted to see with my own natural eyes what Jerusalem, in our day, can still present to us.

Here, after centuries of ruin and suffering, Jerusalem exists in her greatness. She is elevated on the high table-land of Judea, 2500 feet above the level of the sea : except the Mount of Olives, scarce any hill near rises above her. Her walls, which encompass her on every side, are higher and more superb than any city walls I have ever seen ;

the square towers of her gates recal those of Windsor Castle; while their lengthened elevations, with the spires and cupolas they enclose, would have arrested the Pousins and Claudes in preference to any other cities. Her streets are stone, built massive, surmounted by arches, through which the solemn vista claims the painter's art, though by that art still unknown and unrepresented; and the people,—the Jew, the Arab, and the more humble and destitute, who never change,—recal, by their appearance, a period of antiquity in every way removed from the present time.

But besides of man, and the stately pastures of his dwelling, which here bear the mark of no modern date, there are other features that carry the impress of sacred history, which scarce any time can change. This I strongly felt a few days ago, when ascending from the vale of Jordan, by the way of Jericho. I was particularly struck as we got near to Jerusalem, with the beautiful aspect of a village which was "over against us," like Tivoli or Larici. It was Bethany!—the abode of Mary and Martha,—and the scene of the raising of their brother Lazarus from the dead.

From this the road winds round the Mount of Olives, by a path often frequented by our Saviour, and which opens upon the most beautiful view there is of Jerusalem, where the very point is shown where the following verse (xix. St. Luke) refers to:—

"And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying—If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

Changed as this holy city must be since these words were uttered, her sovereignty gone, her people despised, and

of her Temple not one stone left upon another, yet shorn of her beams, this sacred place for grandeur and beauty presents one of the most striking spectacles I ever beheld.

To the expounder of Scripture and to the painter of Sacred History this whole territory must supply what can be learned nowhere else, and professors of art must make a stir to meet the ideas that travellers can so easily acquire. Indeed, since arriving here, I find a new species of criticism applied to our standard works of art; and my humble pursuits and inquiries appear to introduce somewhat novel subjects of discussion.

It has become a question, arising from the present habits of the people here, whether the ancient Jews and Apostles lived most like Saracens or Romans; whether they sat on the ground or on chairs, reposed upon mats or upon bedsteads; and whether the females were then as much secluded from public view as they are now in those countries. I find the learned both of Monks and Rabbis inclined to the former opinion; but as the Synagogue on Mount Zion is filled with seats, like a church, we may hope that the mode of sitting of the Apostles at the table of our Lord, may not by any new information be found to be different from what Leonardo da Vinci has painted it.

Indeed nothing here requires any revolution in our opinions of the finest works of art; with discrepancies, in detail, they are yet constantly recalled by what is here before me. The background of the Heliodorus of Raffaele is a Syrian building; the figures in the Lazarus of Sebastian del Piombo are a Syrian people; and the indescribable tone and feeling of the gifted Rembrandt is brought to mind at every turn, whether in the streets, the Synagogue, or the Holy Sepulchre.

To you, sir, who have the ear and the attention of listening senates at command, it will seem an unforgivable trespass to urge at such length so many crude ideas; but from this distance I look to you from the generous fostering hand you have held out to native art, and from the all-powerful voice you have raised to support the independence of native artists, whether the recent events which have occurred since I left England, and which on leaving I had no idea could have occurred, may not open a new field for the genius of the British artists to work upon;—a field no other nation has thought of, and which up to the present time is untouched by every people, but such a field as, if properly cultivated, would, from the known religious disposition of all ranks, sects, and conditions of her Majesty's subjects, produce that most salutary result,—the Illustration and Study of the Holy Scriptures.

Entreating your most condescending excuse,

I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir Robert Peel,

Your much obliged and devoted servant,

DAVID WILKIE.

Should you deign* to write, British Government, Malta, will reach me."

Copied by me this day, July 5, 1841, word for word.

London, B. R. HAYDON.

* It is singular Allan Cunningham, in his "Life of Wilkie," has omitted this word.—B. R. H.

Copy of a Letter from SIR ROBERT PEEL to the AUTHOR.

DRAYTON MANOR, July 3, 1841.

SIR,

The enclosed is the letter which I received from my lamented friend, Sir David Wilkie, a few days only before the intelligence reached me that he was no more.

It does him so much honour, that I cannot object to your making the use of it, which you ask my permission to make.

I think in justice to the writer, if any portion of it be made public, the whole of it ought to be.

I will thank you to take great care of the original, which indeed requires it from the mutilations it has been subject to, and return it to me.

I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

ROBERT PEEL.

B. R. Haydon, Esq.

However I may differ from Wilkie as to the necessity of going to the Holy Land to study backgrounds for high art, yet every body must admit the interest of the letter.

He went to Jerusalem without sufficient knowledge to enable him to decide on such subjects, and overrated the antiquity he saw from his religious associations.

Such are my impressions of this good and eminent man, as to his genius, his private and his public character.

I think his sudden reputation injured the native simplicity of his mind.

I think the treachery and cruelty of his treatment, from the base envy of his associates, destroyed the confidence in human nature he felt before.

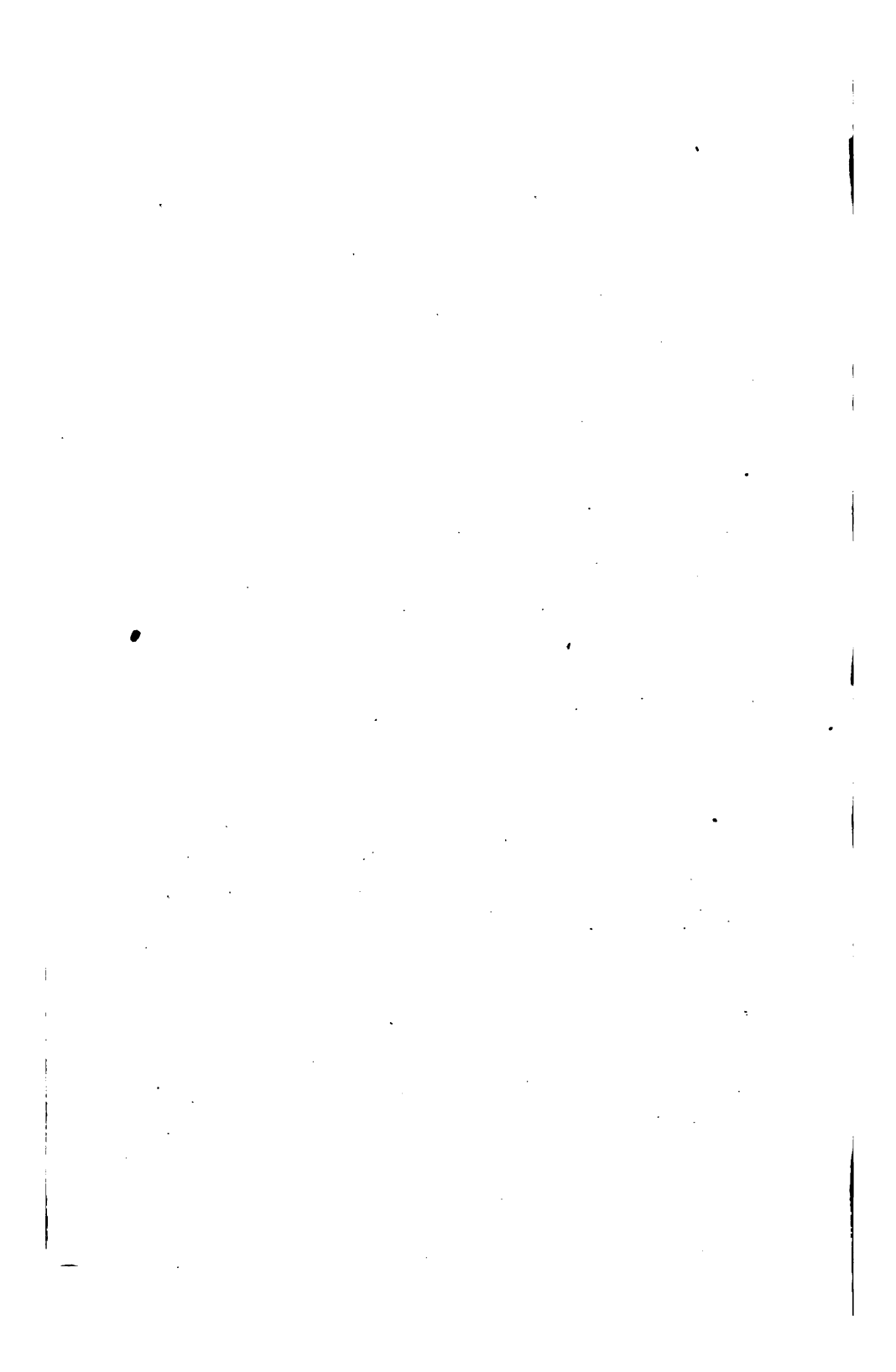
I think the distinctions of a Court roused a desire for shining, where he was not qualified to do so; but who among us can answer for ourselves in similar temptations? who can say he would have left a character so untainted, so eminent, and so honourable? Let us therefore only remember his virtues; for, be assured, his virtues are worthy imitation, whilst what may be considered his vices were but comparative weaknesses after all.

As his death was touching, so was his burial romantic; for what Briton, "whose march is o'er the mountain wave, and home is on the deep," would not glory in anticipation at the poetry of such an entombment as Trafalgar Bay!

As a Christian, he could not have been taken from us at a better time.

His piety had been increased, his belief strengthened, and his hopes exalted, by his visit to the Holy Land; and if ever human being left this world fit for a better, or ready for judgment—it was DAVID WILKIE.

Note.—The strong language with regard to the Royal Academy which I have used in this Lecture, is perfectly just as applied to that period. The *clique* which caused all the mischief then, and twenty years before, have died off, and the latter elections shew a healthier and better spirit.—B. R. H.



LECTURE X.

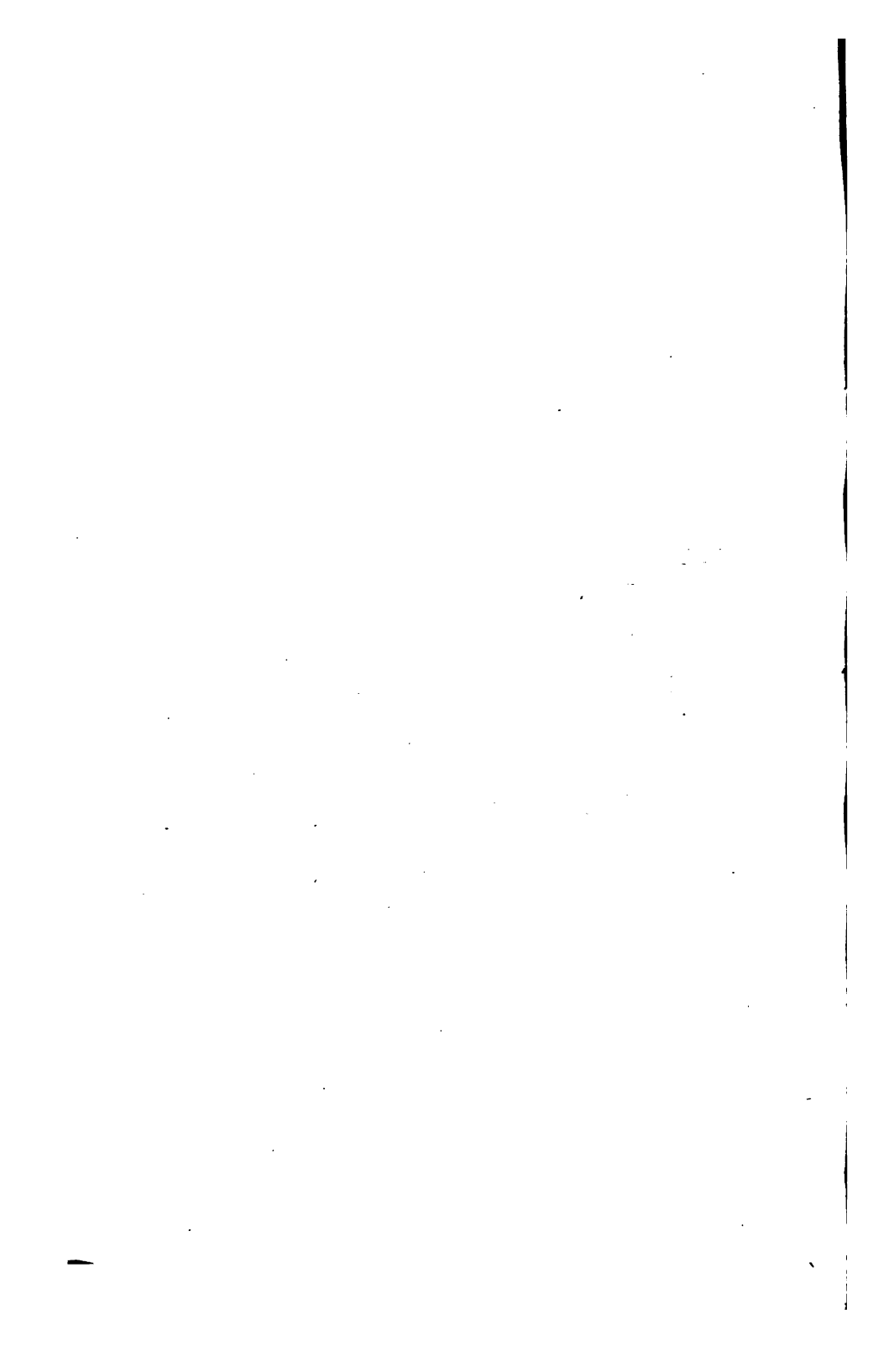
ON THE EFFECT OF THE DIFFERENT SOCIETIES IN
LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART,

ON THE

TASTE OF THE BRITISH NOBILITY AND PEOPLE.

First delivered December 23, 1836,

AT THE LONDON MECHANICS' INSTITUTION.



LECTURE X.

GENTLEMEN,

In my previous Lectures I led your mind gradually and progressively from the first dawn of a principle in Drawing and Composition to the last component parts of imitation, viz.—colour, light and shadow, light and dark; execution and surface (or impasto), as the vehicles of thought and expression. I laid it down to you, and I hope I proved it to you, that thought and expression suffered in power of effect on the spectator, if colour and the other elements of imitation were deficient. That it was accident, and not intention, when the Venetians neglected form,—and accident, and not intention, when the Romans neglected colour; because, when each school discovered its error, each school set about correcting its imperfections, and each school left isolated works* nearly perfect. Yet Reynolds, taking the weaknesses of separate schools as the result of system, instead of accident, laid down their omissions as abstract principles, and formed a code of laws to guide the English student founded on the very weaknesses of these separate schools,

* Transfiguration, Pietro Martyre, and Lazarus.—B. R. H.

which the great masters in each school (Roman and Venetian) corrected as soon as they found out they were wrong, and which Reynolds himself continually gave evidence of mistrusting, though, with the cautious policy for which he was famous, he so managed as to secure votes on either side, whichever side should be proved right in the long experience of the world.

That the union of all parts of art is a principle not new in the world, is evident from the former practice of the great Greeks,—Apollodorus, Zeuxis, Euphranor, Parrhasius, Pamphilus, Apelles, and Protogenes; for it is impossible you can come to any other conclusion, if you attentively consider the passages I quoted from Pliny* for their colour; Quintilian† for their light and shadow; Plutarch‡ and Horace§ for their execution; Aristotle and Plato for their form; and Vitruvius|| for their perspective.

Reynolds says, *reality* of effect is an obstruction to thought. I presume to say, that in an art the elements of which are laid in an imitation of natural objects to convey thinking, reality of effect must and does increase the force of the thought, expression, or intention, to be conveyed. But there is a limit, and the limit is that, viz. the effect on the eye of the spectator at the distance where the whole of any object can be seen. Any imitation in “high art,” which has other objects than to affect the imagination through the eye, at that given distance, descends to that style where detail of imitation is of more consequence than expression or thought, and is for the gratification of those who consider art of no more utility than buy furniture, and give vent to their ecstasies, in discovering with a microscope fifty touches of the

* Lib. xxxvi.

† Lib. xii.

‡ Life of Alexander.

§ Arte Poeticâ.

|| Lib. vii.

brush, which to the naked eye (wonderful fact) looks only *one*!!

There never was a great painter yet who was not compelled at first to work for his existence, and therefore patronage and employment are a necessary appendage to genius, though genius has ever created the taste and patronage by which it has been supported and estimated.

In those ages when genius has been scarce, it was always the prevalent belief that patronage would have produced it; and at periods when genius was prolific, then it was the universal cry that patronage did not do half enough for it.

We gaze in our time with desponding enthusiasm on the great eras of Greek and Italian art, while we find the Italians of the time complaining of their own neglect, and regarding the happy times of Pericles as *we* regard the times of Leo X.; and I dare say Phidias, when he was banished Athens, began to believe, as he approached Olympia, that Egypt, after all, was the place for encouragement. During Napoleon's reign, we in England were always talking that France was the only place; and when I was in France in 1814, the French artists said to me, "England is the place for liberal prices. Here Napoleon kept us painting nothing but boots and epaulets!"

It is curious to see Vasari punning, in one of his prefaces, on the words *Fame* (hunger), and *Fama* (fame), and talking of the unhappy destiny of genius in his own time,—the time of Raffaele, Titian, and Michael Angelo! Such is human nature.

This disposition to hope for the future, regret the past, and despise the present, is innate in human feel-

ings; and has always been the characteristic of men, whose imagination predominated over their reason in all things.

No genius was ever encouraged to the full extent of his own desires, and all men attribute their failure or their obscurity to every other cause but their own want of conduct, their own want of talents, or their own deficiencies of understanding.

The seeds of discontent must ever exist in a nature which lives for ever in a vain struggle to realize the visions of an unlimited conception! What, after all, were the chambers of the Vatican?—the Sistine Chapel?—or the Lesche at Delphi, with what their great inventors could have done, or did imagine, in a state of being unlimited by space,—unchecked by the depravity of crime,—the feebleness of disease,—or the wretched limitations of a miserable earth, but twenty-four thousand miles in circumference?

In the arts, patronage is either public or private: if private, it leads to the production of such works as will suit the convenience of the individual; but if public, the works produced have been characteristic of the qualities of a nation;—the illustration of a great moral principle, or the development of some sublime system,—heroic—poetical—or religious.

When individuals are alone the patrons of art, it is considered little more than a mere matter of furniture! and owing to the destruction at our Reformation of all public works of art, art in England has hitherto been considered fit for nothing else, and continues to be thought so up to the present hour.

This is one of the reasons why there was, 30 years ago,

such an outcry against great works, not because great works are not acknowledged to be necessary to the reputation of a nation which aspires to be distinguished in art; no! but because you and I have got houses No. 1, 2, and 3, Upper Grosvenor Street, Grosvenor Square, and your parlour and my drawing-room are but 11 feet high, and 10 feet wide. As regards *you* and *I*, I admit the perfect justice of our objections, but do not let us sophisticate and argue that great works are not necessary to us as a people of England, and say, there is no space, with a House of Lords* about to be built, and public halls of all descriptions hardly covered throughout the country; yet such is the inconsistent prejudice existing, that the very same people who object to the representation of the great actions of their country the full size of life, will order a portrait of their grandmother on the largest canvas,—larger than the poetical representation of a hero would actually require.† The consequences naturally are, that a poetical painter, with views consistent with the principles of his “high calling,” becomes a burden and a bore. The patrons have taste enough to be aware of the justice of his claims; the portrait-painters too much shrewdness not to be alive to the importance of his ambition. The people alone estimate his views, and they individually are occupied, taxed, and struggling.

This state of things has been gradually gaining ground in Europe for a long time, though it is more rooted in England than any where else, from the domestic cause

* 1836.

† To such a degree is art considered as furniture in England, that men of the highest fortune have gone to a celebrated dealer, and taking out a bit of string, said, “*I want a Titian as long as this!*”

B. R. H.

of the Reformation; and what Canova said to me in 1815 is perfectly just, viz. "that there was, after all, very little grand art left in the world since the foundation of Academies."

The people are decidedly alive to the importance of grand art here in England, and have always crowded to where any grand works of art are to be seen; but the enthusiasm of the people has never been seconded by the state; and the great works successively produced these last fifty years, which have rescued the country from the stigma of incapacity, are hidden from the public eye after the first ebullition, rotting, forgotten, and neglected, till a new season, and a new subject, a cow with two heads, or an ass with three legs, obliterate the recollection of either.

Within my own time, works of all classes of art, which, if collected in one gallery, would inevitably set British art in its true colour before the world, have been shewn and decayed. In fact, I am quite correct in stating, that in no two schools in Europe could an equal number of works be shown, with all their faults, containing so much genuine and native excellence; and yet owing to our want of a local habitation, a native resting-place for the *élites* of our productions, we have no decided character in Europe, and, till we have such gallery, we never can. Every illustrious foreigner goes away with contempt, on the whole, for the genius in England in the arts; when at this very instant there are works in cellars, or lost in the obscurity of private collections, which, if centralized in a National Gallery, would place English art for ever on a basis of the proudest hope; and prove, if such were her productions in spite of her obstructions, what might reasonably be expected from a condition of liberal and annual

state support. It naturally occurs to every foreigner, what is the reason? The reason is naturally found in the various influences of our social condition. To the various number of our influential societies, each acting on the other, and all combined, like Freemasons, to assist each other, in opposition *rather* to all independence of thought, or abstract principles of conduct, than in support of it.

More or less all our societies connected with Taste or Art are confined in their views and narrow in their prejudices connected with native genius.

The basis of all this, as far as art is concerned, is entirely owing to the art being thrown on the protection of individuals.

You hear perpetually from those quarters, it is too large, too bold, too daring, for this country! What country? Britain! the most daring, the most enterprising, the most heroic, the most persevering, the most wealthy, and the most powerful on earth. Good God! are we to be grand in every thing and petty only in grand decoration?

One of the most distinguished Societies is called *Dilettanti*. It has done great things for classical discovery; and illustration must ever acknowledge its great obligation to its taste, its spirit, and its enterprize; but unfortunately this exclusive delight in the productions of the dead render minds on the whole callous to the real genius of the living.

From this distinguished Society have emanated many of our patrons, imbued deeply with enthusiasm for the works and the principles of the ancients; and yet, when their attention is called to modern art, they encourage it entirely in opposition to the present system of encouragement among the Greeks, which produced the very works

which excite the greatest veneration and rapture. The noblemen and gentlemen who proceed from this Society almost set their faces against any principle that will tend to place England on a level with Italy and Greece.

From the Dilettanti Society proceeded a great proportion of the British Gallery Directors, and though all the noblemen subscribed with the greatest liberality to that useful Institution, in order to supply the deficiency of the Academy regarding "high art," at their very first exhibition in 1806,* which was their very best, they gave symptoms at once of being utterly insensible to the true principle of public patronage—heartily sincere in wishing to advance the art, but betraying a lamentable ignorance and insensibility to the nature of the encouragement required, and which among Greeks and Italians rewarded and stimulated the very men the directors held up to the British artist as examples.

At that time I was constantly at the tables of the great, and often and often have I sighed in sorrow to hear the sanguine anticipations, the elegant delusions, and ingenious reasons used in defence of a system of a capricious trifling, well meant, and with the best intentions, that I foresaw and foretold would end, and has ended, as far as high art is concerned, in utter failure.

They began with premiums—an excellent system for the young—but I always strenuously advocated to Lord Mulgrave and Sir George Beaumont, the leading men, premiums do, to help the youth, but commission and employment for the established.

After a year or two, premiums got out of fashion, and then commissions came in with the Spring; and 1000

* They were on the point of rejecting Fuseli's sublime "Lazar House."—B. R. H.

guineas were actually given to a man of great talent* to paint angels for Chelsea Hospital, in honour of the Duke, because all his life he had given great proof of genius for painting pigs! As might be anticipated, commissions ended with the Autumn; and the next season a plan was started to buy only when fine things were found, and at last the novelty of this became a fatigue; and not finding great geniuses starting up in succession, premiums, commissions, purchases, are all given up, as not being the right methods to elicit talents.

I fear, and I fear truly, this noble foundation, which has done so much good to British taste, by the exhibition of fine old works, is guided when it attempts to patronise living genius, more by a desire to afford amusement for the day, and the dinner, than any solid hope to correct soundly, to advance legitimately, or develope powerfully, the energies of the British people.

There has been no consistency of plan, no perseverance in any arrangement; the most eminent artists have been disgusted and driven from its walls by the absolute fatuity of its course, where modern art was concerned; and after 41 years,† “high art,” which it was founded specifically to support, is by it utterly unsupported; and those whom it helped when the novelty of youth was on them, entirely forgotten in their maturity, as if they had never existed; or as if they had never been the wonders of an evening coterie of the high-born, or the fashion of the season.

All human institutions are of course liable to failure and to error; but in alluding to the relative corruptions of the British Gallery and the Royal Academy, let us

* Ward.

† Written 1846.

make this distinction: the noble directors are actuated by the sincerest motives to do the good they profess to do, but are yet to be taught, that no reformation was ever accomplished but by consistency, courage, and perseverance; whilst the Royal Academy is composed of professional men who know well what they are doing, and with great skill and tact take advantage of being placed in a situation for the best of all purposes, to turn it to their own predominance, except in the benevolent management of their funds; which is, as might be expected from men of moral honour, unexceptionable and most benevolent.

Whatever errors the British Gallery have been guilty of, have proceeded from a perpetual change of plan, in hopes of discovering the right one; whereas the Academicians have never varied their plan, from conviction they have got it; viz. the best method of keeping up their own monopoly at the expense of the people.

Thus we have a Dilettanti Society exclusively devoted to what is classical—we have a British Gallery who love only what is little and new—and a Royal Academy more occupied with business than art, which in all institutions I fear is unavoidable.

From the people, and the people alone, must grand art spring; let them be instructed and educated, and they must react on the privileged classes; and in a very few years, if the evidence before the Committee be spread, schools of design soundly established, and professors at the universities, art will begin to bud on a solid foundation.

Of the four elements of education, Aristotle* placed

* Πολιτικη, Η. γ.

Design on a level with Grammar: at the Universities, where he is such an authority, why is he not followed?

The consequence of the influences of these powerful bodies, composed of the educated and the accomplished, has been pernicious in the extreme to living talent; and the result, a National Gallery, which is a disgrace to the nation. Possessed of the Cartoons, it is too small to contain them; and with the ceiling of Whitehall, in execution the finest thing of Rubens' pencil, we have no room to move it to. In fact, the National Gallery is the climax of that system originated by the Academy, backed by the British Gallery, and kept alive by the Dilettanti,—a system of petty private patronage and small works, to which all three would be extremely happy if this nation would compress their genius.

It must be evident from the respective condition of the principal societies of art and science in this country, that there is a want of a new system and a higher power; and that power is the state, and the public bodies. But here again I cannot but feel alarm; for our statesmen leave College with so little instruction in art, and their minds are so influenced by the habits of office, they would not turn for guidance to those in whose sincerity they might depend for advice, but to the authorities of art; and let what will be the soundness of principle which influences the decision of others, a sneer from an authority in art would throw distrust where ought to be confidence, and disbelief where should exist implicit conviction.

Though I am perfectly convinced this country will ultimately triumph over all her obstructions, yet the first step is the discovery what these obstructions are. If ignorance were the greatest, ignorance is easily remedied by instruction; but besides ignorance, there is mistaken

zeal, and misplaced veneration. We are in the same condition Horace describes the Romans to be, when every thing foreign was scrambled for, and became an absolute infatuation. In his time, picture-dealing and statue-making were complete trades, as they are now; and the consequences were similar on the genius of the Romans.

West, in his excellent letter to the Northern Society of Fine Arts, many years ago, admirably says,—“Your zeal in cherishing the fine arts, the protection you offer them, are highly honourable to you: London and Bath have already institutions, and the accession of your present undertaking reasonably induces the hope that your joint example may be followed by every city in the United Kingdom.

“Had such a spirit been sooner awakened, had patronage in the higher departments of art been more early extended to ingenious youths, to the many of distinguished talents, whose ardour of study and whose abilities I have witnessed, passing before me for full half a century, England would by this time have possessed men as eminent in historical painting as she now boasts in portrait, in the useful arts, in science and philosophy; in all which her attainments so conspicuously exalt her above all other nations.”

In allusion to early habits of seeing works of native talent, he proceeds to say: “They were the causes why whole communities, both in Greece and Italy, became emulous to cherish fine art among them. For *their* porticoes, their temples, their churches, palaces and dwellings, were the rich repositories of great works, and perpetually before the eyes of youth of all ranks.

“It is in no slight degree to be attributed to the want in this country of rooms and galleries filled with the pro-

ductions of its own living and *native* genius, that the love for the arts, and their consequent growth, has been retarded among us; and it is no less owing (I should say entirely, *entirely owing*) to such galleries *having been filled and adorned* with the productions of pencils *cherished* in other nations, that the now senior portion of men of taste in the opulent classes of England have imbibed from *their infancy* a *predilection* for the works of *foreign schools*.

"No man, I assert," (says West,) in which I most heartily join him, "can place a higher value on the real works of the great masters of all schools, or hold their (sacred) names in higher respect, than myself, nor is there any one who would more earnestly desire to see their treasures in the cabinet of our gentlemen and our nobles. But when spurious productions are imposed on the liberal purchaser, to the exclusion and contempt of real living merit, one is at a loss which to condemn most—the knavery or the folly.

"Had the communities of Greece, Italy, and Flanders, neglected to cherish the early progress of living talents, we should never have seen the splendid works which have immortalized at once the countries in which they were executed, the people who patronized and the artists who patronized them."

He then hopes that drawing will become a part of general education, which will give to such as embrace the mechanic arts a superior skill and taste in all they do, and all they do will be more improving to the people.

"The influence of taste, thus early engrafted, and extending itself to all branches of manufacture, will meet the higher and more wealthy orders, whose accomplished minds will feel and relish the increase of elegance diffused

over their domestic retirements. For never have, and never will, the arts take root in any country, until the people in that country generally feel and understand the constitutional excellence and refinement of domestic comforts which they spread around them.

“ Had the patronage of those countries where they have been principally cherished rested solely with the leaders and conquerors, or with the popes and princes, had not it been accomplished by that which flowed from numerous individuals of rank and wealth, neither the porticoes, the temples, the churches, nor the palaces and galleries of those countries would ever have been so superbly filled as they were, nor could those collections have been made from thence which have filled so many cabinets and galleries elsewhere.

“ The patronage then so generally dispersed was directed to the protection of living genius, and they by whom it was dispersed sought to form no other collections than the works of native and living masters.

“ This is the true basis of national eminence in the arts ; on any other ground there can be no such thing as patronage ; nothing else is worthy of the name. The encouragement, therefore, extended to the genius of a single living artist, though it may produce but one original work, adds more to the celebrity of a people, and is a higher proof of true patriotic ardour, and a generous love for the progress of art, than all the collections that ever were made from the productions of other countries, and all the expenditure that ever was made in making them.

“ I know no people,” concludes this venerable old man, in which I heartily concur, “ I know no people since the Greeks, who have indicated a higher promise to equal them than the British nation. But this can only

take place when the whole mass of the people shall be awake to the usefulness of the arts, and the splendour they confer; and that every province would then afford the means of cherishing them by exhibition and patronage, with the same pride the Greeks filled their temples, or the Italians their churches, with works whose fame is now fixed for ever."

This admirable letter was written by West in his old age, and the principles laid down in it are an honour to his heart, and to his understanding and soundness of view. He was a shrewd, sagacious, well informed, but ill educated man; mild, communicative, and affectionate. His most celebrated works are Wolfe, and La Hogue, in which he destroyed for ever the absurd prejudice that modern subjects are incapable of being painted on great principles; as if the lines of composition could not be illustrated by coats and waistcoats, as well as by togas or tunics.

In these immortal works he has added to the art of the world.

Of his larger and Scriptural works I am not an admirer; he had no feeling for expression or colour; his drawing was meagre, and his forms without elevation; the absurdity of placing him next in rank to the Caracci, with such geniuses as Rubens, Rembrandt, Velasquez, and Murillo intervening, not to mention Domenichino, Guido and Caravaggio, is too absurd to refute.

Posterity must rank him as one of the machinisti, and surely not so high as Luca Giordano, Pietro da Cortona, or Lanfranco. I question if the French would place him before Le Sueur or Le Brun, and surely we will not place Poissin after him.

When Canova was here, after discussing his merits, I

said, "At least he composes well:" to which he replied, "*Il ne compose pas,—il met des figures en groupes.*" This was an exquisite distinction.

To West's immortal honour, he felt at once the Elgin Marbles (a passport to immortality), and would hear of nothing that tended to negative their inherent divinity.

You will perceive by this letter, that West asserts forming collections of foreign productions is not patronage of native art.

The productions of other schools should never be acquired for any other purpose than as examples; when enough for that purpose is acquired, the patronage of the country should then be devoted to reward and stimulate the living.

The genius of the time should always get the patronage of the time.

Cimabue had as much patronage as Raffaele; had the authorities when Cimabue lived, waited and let him die, because he was not a Raffaele, Raffaele himself would hardly have gone much further; for Raffaele only completed what Cimabue, Giotto, and Massaccio, had begun.

It appears to me no country was ever great, or ever will be, where native art was not the prime object of king, nobility, and people. This is a truism which ought to be cut in letters of gold in every school of art in Europe.

The Egyptians and the Greeks had no productions of other nations to instruct or impede them.

To adorn their own houses, their own palaces, and their own temples, they represented their own actions, and employed their own artists; and the consequence is, they rank higher than the Romans, who did not do so; who did, what we are doing, preferred foreign works, foreign artists, and foreign subjects.

When people have a passion for any object, mountains are trifles; but when they are urged to do any thing because it is only a duty, I am afraid *trifles* become *mountains*.

It is extraordinary what ingenuity, what absurd truisms, what inconsistencies, are put forth always in England, to prevent alteration: let a thing be ever so open to ridicule, ever so open to refutation, ever so palpably absurd, if it has been established, if law has sanctioned it, if prejudice defends it, if time protects it, a thousand swords will leap from their scabbards to defend it, from acknowledged, visible, irrefutable improvement! No, it must not be; any thing is better than change; any certain inconvenience, if time has protected it, is better than any positive good, if it be new.

In a most useful publication, "The Penny Magazine," my evidence was honoured by quotation, in favour of an annual grant for historical painting.

"But," says the writer, "if our national character precludes the hope of historical painting being generally encouraged for the ornament of our churches, so our government polity seems to shut out the hope of annual grant.

"Yet," he continues, "something should be done nationally: it seems reasonable that our public buildings should be suitably adorned."

Why, let me ask the able writer, is £300 a year to be granted to the Irish Academy in the estimates, and any grant to be considered inconsistent with the same polity, for native high art, when the writer says public buildings ought to be adorned? and yet he says the only plan for adorning them, viz. government vote, is inconsistent with our government polity!

Our New Houses of Parliament afford a fine field for the encouragement of English historical painting. This is the opinion of many witnesses, especially Professor Waagen, of Berlin. He says: "The construction of New Houses of Parliament would afford a fine opportunity."

There is no doubt of it; and if it be not done, and done entirely by Britons, it will be such a stain, too deep in the presence of enlightened Europe ever to be effaced.

But how can it be done, if not done by government grant? Does not the able writer see the contradiction, of first saying a certain thing ought to be done, and then affirming the only way to accomplish it is inconsistent with our polity?

Every thing seems consistent with our government polity, but art. When I look over the estimates for thirty years, and read the millions spent; when I see £20,000 for the Townley Marbles, £35,000 for the Elgin, £58,000 for the Angerstein's, £19,000 for the Phigaleian marbles, £11,000 for two Correggios, £3,000 for another, £9,000 for Hamlet, Titian's, £7,000 for a Murillo, and £3,000 for a Rubens, and then think of the general consternation of the authorities, the hysterical terror which seizes the poor beggarly English government, without a guinea in the Treasury, or a people to pay one, at the bare idea of a humble thousand or two annually, for that species of art on which all other art hinges, and which never was in any country developed without it, it is really lamentable! But, say they, poverty is a necessary stimulus to genius! Believe me, competence is a much better one. This beautiful doctrine was maintained in an able article in the Westminster Review some years since: I will examine its pretensions to belief.

There is no bitterer enemy to a pursuit, than the man

who has failed in it : for he carries into his enmity sufficient knowledge to mislead the ignorant, and sufficient malice to gratify the baffled ; and however painful it may be to acknowledge the truth, disappointed artists in general do their best to prevent the success of others, however beneficial that success might be, when they themselves have failed for want of talent or want of application.

“ There is a notion afloat,” says the writer, “ that genius is the *child* of patronage.” What man of talent ever asserted such absurdity ? Genius is the gift of God ; but the degree to which this genius can develop itself in painting or sculpture depends of course on the opportunity given it by patronage ; because high art requires space and opportunity, though great genius will not be impeded from proving its existence by the want of either the one or the other ; the *germ* will exist, but not shew itself to the same extent as when it has room for its display.

He proceeds to say, “ there is a supposition afloat, that a vote of money is requisite for the encouragement of historical painting. Now, if this be true, ’tis pity ; if not true, pernicious : at all events, it teaches artists cannot attain eminence for want of something extrinsic and beyond themselves, or their unaided powers—that it is hopeless to strive, and therefore wise to yield the contest—that they should pray to Jupiter, instead of putting their shoulder to the wheel.”

The supposition, that money is the sinews of art as well as of war, does not teach the artist he cannot do all he ought as a great painter—that he cannot execute works to rank with the Vatican or the Parthenon, unless

a Vatican or Parthenon be given him by patronage to adorn.

The painter in England does not, and never has prayed to Jupiter, *without* putting his shoulder to the wheel; but he has all along been putting his shoulder to the wheel most lustily; and he complains, that after having rolled his load to the brink of the hill, *Jupiter won't smile*, in spite of his having prayed heartily for seventy years, and fasted often; and thus, from mere exhaustion, he is obliged to let his load go again, and roll to the bottom.

"Who patronized Wilkie," says the critic, in his minority of genius, when he ate his hasty meal in the back settlements of the Slaughter Coffee-house?" Who? I reply—Lord Mansfield; and but for Lord Mansfield's commission, the picture of the "Village Politicians," which founded our domestic style, would, perhaps, never have been painted; for at the time Wilkie received it, what was he doing? Why, painting foxy portraits for bread and cheese! And what had he undertaken to do? Why, to copy Barry's pictures at the Adelphi for bread and cheese! Wilkie is an unfortunate example: for if there ever were a man whose genius was developed by patronage, it is Wilkie, who would have painted any thing, or that thing only where most patronage would have ensued. "Who fostered the feebleness of Martin?" says the critic again. Who?—Why, Mr. Henry Hope, the Duke of Buckingham, &c.; and because nobody now steps forward to foster Martin, Martin has ceased to paint at one time, and has taken to engrave his own previous paintings, simply because his engravings are more fostered than his pictures. So much for Martin and Wilkie, as

examples of the benefit of not being patronized, to prove the principles of our critic in the "Westminster!"

"How could patronage," says he again, "produce a "Peter Martyr," or "Paul at Athens?" This is but half stating the question. Genius must exist, patronage *can't create it*; but genius may exist, and die without full development for want of patronage. This is the fair statement of the question. The "Peter Martyr" and "Paul at Athens" could not have been produced by the most splendid patronage, if Titian and Raffaele had not been adequate to the opportunity given; but *we know* they were *neither* produced without *positive order*—that is, patronage, a promise of an adequate reward for the thing painted.

"Why not patronize poetry?" he adds. Have not the most splendid poets been patronized? Was not Milton? Dr. Johnson speaks of the great sale of "Paradise Lost," though his immediate purchase money was a trifle.

The fact is, the genius and the patron must exist together; and they have always existed together in all the great eras of art. When patrons exist without genius, then patronage produces what Louis XIV. produced; but when *they exist together*, then patronage brings forth what Pericles and Phidias produced—Julius and Michael Angelo—Leo and Raffaello—Charles the Fifth and Titian.

"To begin with the beginning," says the critic, "Phidias was a great sculptor because Pericles was a great patron; whereas," he adds, "Phidias had as much to do with developing the mind of Pericles as Pericles had with Phidias." And then, he talks of the marbles of the Pantheon, and that the Olympian Jupiter was produced before he was patronized by Pericles; and then he asks triumphantly, "what had Pericles to do with the

development of his mind?" He says also, "the Medici had nothing to do with the development of Da Vinci, Michael Angelo, and Raffaello." In the first place, Pericles made Phidias director-general of all public works of art. *This was something.* In the next place, he employed him to adorn the Parthenon (and not the Pantheon—(oh, learned Theban!) in the Acropolis. Would the gènius of Phidias have been so developed, if this appointment had not been given?—Should we have had the Elgin marbles! In the next place, unfortunately for our critic, Phidias did not execute the Jupiter until he was banished to Olympia, and at the request of the authorities or patrons he executed that work; and he was banished, after he had been patronized by Pericles and the Parthenon was finished!

With respect to the Italians, was not Michael Angelo brought up from a child in the school Lorenzo had established?—did he not mix with all the great men of the time, Politiano, Bembo, and others, at Lorenzo's table?—was he not able, from being placed above necessity by Lorenzo's magnificence and patronage, to devote himself exclusively to high art? Were not the Gates of Ghiberti, the works of Cimabue, of Donatello, Giotto, Da Vinci, and Raffaello, the result of patronage animating and rewarding their genius? Did not the "Capella Sistina" proceed entirely from Julius the Second's positive orders? Did not Michael Angelo refuse, and beg, and pray, to be excused, because he was a sculptor, and not a painter?—and did he not begin and obey his patron against his own will, and succeed to his own astonishment, and then proved, because he found, in consequence of being employed, he possessed a power he did not know he had? There never was a more complete thunderbolt of refuta-

tion to the critic's theory than Michael Angelo, because he is the greatest of all geniuses; and yet, but for patronage, and patronage alone, we should never have had the works which even give him the greatest claim to being called one!

His assertion, too, that the richest artists have been isolated men—that he could tell of Greeks and Italians who had died in beggary, is equally absurd. The question stands thus:—Were those who died in beggary greater men than those who died rich?—did the art owe more to the former than to the latter?—are the beggars in art the men who are the most illustrious names in it? No, no, certainly not: the greatest artists have all been the richest; Phidias, Alcamenes, Praxiteles, and Lysippus, as sculptors—Polygnotos, Zeuxis, Parrhasius, Pamphilus, and Apelles, as painters, were all rich, well patronized, and independent in circumstances. Pamphilus took no pupil under a talent:—“*docuit neminem minoris talento,*” says Pliny, lib. 35. These were Greeks. Among the moderns, Cimabue, Donatello, Ghiberti, Michael Angelo, Raffaello, Titian, Julio Romano, Paolo Veronese, Tintoretto, Rubens, Vandyke, Claude, were all rich; Da Vinci would have been rich, but was too capricious; Guido and Parmegiano were rich, but gambled. In short, the greatest artists have always been the best patronized throughout the world, no doubt of it: in this I defy refutation.

In taking up English art, the critic does not make the distinction of the portrait-painter from the other painters; and because Reynolds died worth £70,000, and Lawrence sometimes made £8,000, a-year, he infers, there is no want of patronage, in the enlarged sense; whereas, the reverse is the fact: there is no patronage for high art;

nor will there be, till the authorities in England do as the authorities did in Egypt, Greece, and Italy; and nothing but the most malignant and mischievous spirit can animate any man who comes forth, at this critical moment, to do his best to nip the budding conviction, which is daily gaining ground in the minds of the rich and the powerful, that a fair opportunity has never yet been given to the English historical painter, and who are willing to give him that opportunity, as soon as it can be brought to bear.

Every one who has seen Sir A. Hume's ^{fine little} model will and must admit, Proctor was a man of great genius:—he gained both prizes for sculpture and painting. Well, for a long time Mr. West never heard of Proctor; he inquired for him, and found him living in a garret in Clare Market, on one roll a-day, and drinking at the pump! This is a fact. Affected at this condition, Mr. West applied for, and got for him his allowance to go to Italy, to which he was entitled, in consequence of his getting the medal. Mr. West invited him to dine, and communicated his good fortune: Proctor, too much affected, died from the over-excitement sudden success had made on a frame exhausted from suffering!

According to our critic, this was the *true* patronage—nothing like your roll and water to produce great works. Barry lived in filth, Protogenes eat lupins, and Proctor a penny roll. Raffaele lived like a prince, Rubens like a king, Michael Angelo in comfort, and Titian luxuriously: does our critic think your penny roll would have made those heroes produce greater works than they have produced?

We heard a *patron* say once, “ Good prices were *bad* things! Milton had but ten pounds for ‘Paradise Lost’!”

The question is, ought Milton to have had no more? This is a fine theory for a person who pays—but not very agreeable to him who is to be paid. Would Milton have produced “Paradise Lost,” if he had been harassed by bailiffs, tortured by want, or been forced to live on a roll and go to a pump?—No, no; Milton knew better—he had no objection to a tasty ragout, and burst forth once, with “Gad a’mercy, Betty!” when his wife (as cook) had pleased his palate!

All the nonsense about the poverty of genius is cant. Poverty never helped any man’s powers, painter or poet. Many painters, and poets too, have done great things in spite of poverty: but would they not have painted better, have written better, and conceived with more fertility, had they not been poor? Let our critic try the roll for a month, and then write another article for the “Westminster.” I’ll be bound to find symptoms of the water system in the first ten lines, instead of the vinegar now apparent.

Here it is where I can, without apparent intrusion, bear testimony to the public spirit of the distinguished town of Liverpool; here it is I ought to declare, that Liverpool is the only distinguished town since the Reformation which has had the moral courage to employ native historical painters, on the true, thorough-bred principles of patronage, which produced such glorious results in Italy and Greece!

This is the way to produce a school of high art, native high art;—this is the way to answer the sneers of Winkelman and Du Bos: and when the glory and fame which will accrue to Liverpool shall have spread all over the world, for such a sound public basis of proceeding, other distinguished towns will and must follow such an example; and the

genius of the country, having evidence that competence and not ruin will be the reward for ardour and industry, will devote its energies to deserve similar rewards, and come out of the world with a power of which there is no seeing the vast result, on wealth, taste, and manufactures. Such was the opinion of one whose name is synonymous in every city in Europe, with elegant accomplishment, refined taste, beauty of diction, and occasional depth of thinking. His literature and his love of art have cast a halo round the name of Liverpool, which is felt in conjunction with its commercial power, in every part of the world.; its taste for elegant embellishment and accomplished literature, can never die, while each successive generation pronounces with respect and gratitude the name of Roscoe, the father of its accomplishments and its taste.

While Roscoe is remembered, Liverpool has a respect to keep up: and when will he be forgotten? Never, while the world takes an interest in the memory of the Medici Princes of Florence.

His interest was as great for the refinement of the mechanic as the gentleman; for the humble as well as for the high-born. Of the importance of art to a great country, in one of the most beautiful discourses ever written, at the opening of the institution, Roscoe concludes (page 53)—

“Nor are the arts connected with design—as painting, sculpture, and architecture, to be considered as drawbacks, or as the accumulation of national wealth, or as useless dependents upon the bounty of a country.

“On the contrary, wherever they have been encouraged, they have contributed in an eminent degree not only to honour but to enrich the state. How shall we estimate

the influx of wealth into the cities of Italy in the sixteenth century, or into Holland and the Low Countries, in the seventeenth, as a compensation for those works of arts, which, thought highly of on their first appearance, have continued to increase in value to the present day, and form at this time no inconsiderable portion of the riches of Europe? See the productions of their artists sought after by the principal sovereigns and most distinguished characters of the times, and ask whether the remuneration conferred on their labour was exceeded by the profits obtained by single and individual exertions in any other department.

“ If it be conceded that the person who can produce an article of the greatest value from the least material, who can compete with the painter?

* * * * *

“ I trust, then, it will be clearly understood, that it is not as a matter of pleasure and gratification merely, as objects of luxury, I recommend the arts. My purpose is to show, when they are discouraged, no country must expect its full advantages, even in a lucrative point of view, much less arrive at a high degree of civilization and prosperity, and to signalize itself in the annals of mankind: whoever has attended in the slightest degree to the subject, must acknowledge how intimately the improvements in our manufactures have kept pace with the proficiencies made in the arts of design, so as to give a manifest superiority in this respect over the rest of the world.”

At that time, 1817, this assertion was correct, but not so now, my friends; the French are as decidedly superior in design for manufacture to us, as we are to them in excellence of material: and why is this?

From the prodigious effects of the great school of

design founded by Napoleon at Lyons, under the advice of David, for mechanics, and the principle of which was, that the designer for manufacture must be educated like the designer for high art.

There's the great secret for French superiority (for a time), and till we imitate them superior they must be.

The report of the Committee contains a fund of useful knowledge as to the connection of art and manufacture. It has sold more than any subject, however politically exciting; and it has worked its way silently but irresistibly; and to impress all classes with the importance in every calling in life, of the art of design, let me entreat you all, mechanic or artist, at home or abroad, to keep this in view;—that the figure in design for manufacture is the basis. Begin with hands and feet and heads,—first the bones—then the muscles—then the antique—and after drawing these well in proper positions, draw them in difficult positions.

Above all, after your day's labour, draw what you have done from recollection. Reynolds advised sketching in the streets; with deference, I prefer keeping what you observe in your imagination, till at last nothing escapes.

After having gone through the figure in this way, till you are perfect, begin to paint in light and shade;—but never use a cold colour, never accustom your eye to a cold or hot colour; take a warm tint.

At first, remember, no tricks: plain, honest solid painting from beginning to end.

When you paint in light and shade with ease begin to colour; never copy; take nature, be simple, and above all clean.

The more you practice the more you will value this advice.

The great masters, Raffaello, Rubens, Julio Romano, always drew in their works in correct outlines. The Venetians massed in their compositions. If you can draw, I prefer the latter plan; for an outline is seldom got rid of, and nothing is so offensive.

At first do not perplex yourself with extensive compositions, and never lose your patience; whatever may be your repeated failures, depend on it patience in the pursuit of excellence is the next quality to genius.

As Napoleon said of the word "impossible," so I say of impatience in art; it is not known in the language.

I am afraid exhibitions are the bane of excellence; could all exhibitions be shut up for five years, and every British artist be forced by act of parliament to draw and dissect, do not you imagine improvement would be visible? As this cannot be enforced without danger to the state, on such a *genus irritabile*—suppose one resolved to make full use of his hours not devoted to subsistence, would not those correctnesses be then added, so much wanted in British productions?

In the course of time they must and they will be added; the sooner the better, and the sooner you are all convinced of their propriety, the sooner will the necessary improvement take place.

I am quite convinced of the ultimate triumph of art in Britain: as taste spreads, the conviction will take root, that patronage of native talent is the only true patronage; and as it was the leading code of the ancients, so it must be of the moderns, if they wish to equal or outstrip the great who have gone before.

Southey said to me twenty-five years ago, that it took one man's life to get a principle acknowledged; another to get it acted on.

I have lived to see the great object of all our struggles began—*state employment*—acknowledged to be necessary. West, Reynolds, Barry, Opie, Flaxman, all advanced it a degree; but none were so uncompromising as myself; none were so reckless of his interest, or so careless of offending his highest friends, where the honour of the art was concerned: therefore I have a right to rejoice, when I see those principles acknowledged and about to be enforced, which must shortly put to the test the genius of Britain, and in the face of Europe prove its importance or its conscious power.

LECTURE XI.

ON A COMPETENT TRIBUNAL,

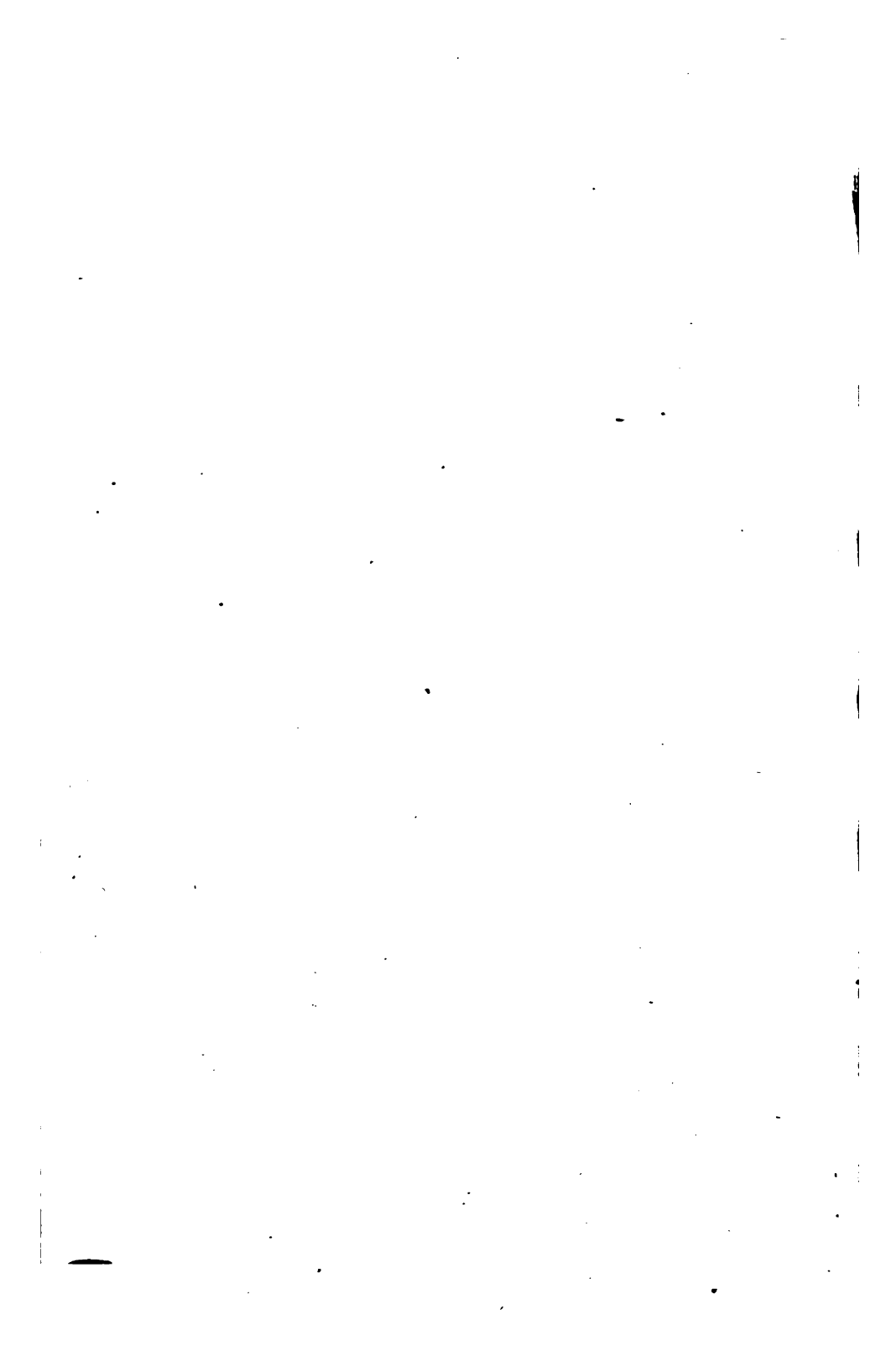
AND

ITS IMPORTANCE TO A NATION WHERE ART IS
CONCERNED.

Delivered 1837,

AT THE LONDON MECHANICS' INSTITUTION,

AND AT ALL THE LEADING INSTITUTIONS OF THE COUNTRY.



LECTURE XI.

GENTLEMEN,

AN able writer in a distinguished periodical* asserts, that "high art is *foolishly* held up as containing the excellence of art." And does it not? does not that style in its essence which contains the finest and most voluptuous forms of women, the grandest and most heroic forms of men, each beautiful in the abstract, combined so skilfully as to excite associations in the mind of the spectator, by expression of feature and action of figure, the very associations of the great characters celebrated in the most interesting moment of a remarkable event? Does not a style that does this, that has always done this in its perfection, contain the supreme excellence of art? Surely, he who denies this is prejudiced in his perceptions.

In the first place, what are the powers of mind requisite? what is the knowledge in science, the originality of genius, necessary to do this? will you put the power to catch the most pleasing expression of a sitter's face, and transfer it, which must be seen before it can be done, and there's an end of invention?—will you put the genius

* Blackwood.

required to develope the vulgar passions, to paint landscape even in the poetical sea-views, animals, or still life, in comparison with the powers required to imagine great characters that are passed, to identify heroic actions that are immortal, or to abstract principles, moral, metaphysical; or religious, that regulate the liberties or destinies of nations?

The mere language in high art is abstractive. To fit men and animals, the instruments of the painter and sculptor, for his use, is an effort of deduction: to clear the accidental from the essential requires perspicuity of reasoning powers, and the capacity to go back to the first principles of things.

This is the language of the epic, and though in the dramatic and historic the great artist descends to the individual, yet even here, knowing the essence of the species, even here he retains only the abstract of the set to which the individual belongs, and rejects with keen eye, unerring and decided conviction, the useless and the superabundant.

Therefore, never suffer any sophistry to lead you astray from your loyal duty to high art; let each man be great in his way—excellence in all styles is delightful; but it is not, it cannot be too much to say, that even when the intellectual process of merely preparing an historical picture is considered, in conjunction with the still further effort to complete it, surely when completed in its perfection individually, or taken as part of a series, it must not be called hyperbolic to say it contains the excellence of art.

I have proved to you that knowledge of the human figure is the basis of all other knowledge in art; and the power of drawing it the basis of the power of drawing

every thing else: now as deep knowledge of the construction is the basis of comprehending its motions and its actions, and as no other style requires this knowledge and this power to the same degree, it follows that all other styles will depend for their degree of excellence in great measure on a greater or less degree of excellence developed in the highest species of painting.

So much science extensively applicable to other pursuits is involved in its excellence, that those pursuits, viz. design in manufacture, &c. will always be in an inferior condition in that country where the manufactures have not "high art" in a sound condition to look up to as a guide.

We are inferior to the French and Italians of 1500; to the Greeks beyond all conception, and even to the Egyptians, in our design, in every species of manufacture.—Why? Because our pursuits in art are low; because we do not cherish that style as a nation which is the base of excellence in those departments; and because such writers as the one alluded to strive not to raise the taste, but to keep it on a par with the self-love, vanity, trading propensities, and cold-blooded heartlessness of the sneerers.

* There are some men who have that hateful propensity to sneer at all which the world holds high, sacred, or beautiful; not with the view of dissipating doubt, or giving the delightful comfort of conviction, but to excite mysterious belief of their own capacity, to cloke their own envy, to chuckle if they can confuse, and revel if they can chill the feelings. According to them love is nothing but lust—religion nothing but delusion; all high views are

* Extract from my letter on the Elgin Marble question, 1816. See Examiner and Champion, March 17th.

elevated notions, wild dreams, and distempered fancies; no man leaves off from what they write but with the dark starts of a night-mare, a distaste for beauty, a doubt of truth, an indifference towards virtue, and an apprehension about religion; but most of all, a pang, and a deep one, at the mistake nature made at giving a portion of capacity to beings of such heartless propensities; whose great delight seems to be, to hit the prejudices, calculate on the envies, and touch the sympathies of the heartless, the pompous, and the bigotted.

There is a great mistake abroad, viz. that the historical painters cry out for assistance, gifts, pensions; nothing of the sort, they want employment, not charity. Surely, if the state can afford £10,000 to the Poles, £28,000 for the Euphrates expedition, £60,000 for a Niger expedition, which failed, and £30,000 for an Ophthalmic Hospital, which blinded all the old soldiers, and ended in ruin; surely it is neither rebellious against duty, loyalty, or common sense, to say, English historical painting, which, in what we call the barbarous ages, was in full employment, might at least in these ages of fashion, taste, and annuals—English high art, which is celebrated throughout Europe for its desperate struggles, deserves at least to share a little, a sprinkle from the sea of public expenditure.

“ Governments,” says the able writer I reply to, “ contract with every individual for common labour, and common talent, because in a general way they have no right to expect more. But superior talents, and more than common talents, produce greater benefits to the public than they expected when their services were contracted for; it is manifestly to the common interest that the overplus of talent should be considered as entitling the

possessor to an additional claim; and if such claim be not admitted, there is not that due encouragement to stimulate gifted persons to extraordinary exertions from which the general good is so much advanced.

"Surely," says he, "it is neither liberal or just to receive a great deal, and make a very small return, because there exists no law to compel you to make a greater."

Then the reply is,—Is every class to be remunerated by the state? Is the merchant, the manufacturer, the speculator of every species, to put forth schemes for the public good (that is the pretence), and then come upon the state if they are unfortunate? I will bring the high-minded banker, the disastrous breeder of racers for the honour of the blood; the starving patentee, I will bring, says another, I will bring them all into court, we will learn where we are to begin and where to end; we will get rid of a prejudice and establish a principle, and will prove that the government has nothing whatever to do with the question, or that if they should interfere, there are cases in every pursuit, and in every grade, which will as loudly call for aid in the name and for the honour of old England, as the miseries of the votaries of the pen and the pencil.

In reply, the first writer admirably says,—“It should be recollected the unfortunate persons alluded to commence their speculations in which their own good alone is their object. But this is not the case where the advantages brought to the common stock are very great, yet consist not of marketable productions in a pecuniary point of view.

“It is possible for a man without any view or without any possibility of payment to make known inventions

of the greatest importance to human life. Philanthropy and a love of science alone may have been the motives ; yet in the productions of these inventions, and in bringing them to bear, the personal interests of the individual may have been greatly neglected. Is the government just or wise in letting men of that class starve, thereby killing the sources of the greatest advantage to mankind ?

If to raise the moral feeling of a people, if to engender in them a love and a taste for the highest qualities that adorn and civilize mankind, be deserving reward, let no governments with narrow policy neglect them, whether painters or poets : and what can be said of poets is more immediately applicable to painters. Who will deny that Polygnotos, Phidias, Zeuxis, Pamphilus, and Apelles, Michael Angelo, Raffaele, Titian, and Correggio, by being given opportunities for the full display of their genius, did make Greece and Italy illustrious in fame ? who will deny that the concourse of strangers to visit the treasures they produced did not repay their country for the expenditure of their governments tenfold ? Surely the conclusion is indisputable.

The question then is, who composes in all countries the government ? A class generally the best educated, the most independent, and highest born. This, then, composes the tribunal who decide on the merits of individuals, and the value of their propositions ; who in fact controul and disburse the people's treasure under parliament, and distribute its superfluous income in works of taste, embellishment, and high feeling, which in all countries have tended to abstract the mind from sensual gratifications, and raised the standard of a people's sources of innocent pleasure.

This is a very important duty, and no duty has been so shamefully neglected, or so infamously trifled with as this, in Britain.

This is now become so palpable by our painful failure at Charing Cross, that more than one noble lord has said to me, there is no subject in which both Houses are so much abroad about as the arts; they do not understand the subject.

Of whom is this said? Of men refined to a pitch of pain—the most gallant, the most spirited, the best educated men in Europe!

Tell me a battle where their blood has not been shed with the recklessness of the commonest private? tell me a danger they have not shared, a charity they have not assisted, a private suffering they do not alleviate, or a virtuous wish of any father they do not aid. Every body talks of their wealth, their power, their faults, their vices, but nobody talks of their sorrows or their virtues: believe me, I have seen the same agony, the same distraction, the same despair over a dying child, as amongst the humblest of ourselves. Believe me, a philosopher can trace the hand of the Almighty to recal and correct them, in their class, amidst their enjoyments, and their happiness, and their splendour, as over the rest of his creatures; and though they have their vices and their follies, like all human beings, I have seen, and can bear testimony, to the tenderest parental affection, the most respectful filial obedience, and the most refined domestic fidelity and happiness, as in the most tender and most domestic of the middle class.

And these are the refined people! and this is the delightful class, who, with a few exceptions, are infants in perceiving the moral power of grand art! What is the

cause of this? A neglect in their education. I tell them now, what I told them thirty years ago on the Elgin Marble contest, and which made them so very half angry with me ever since,—but I have set my life upon a cast, and I will bear the hazard of the die,—I tell them again, they grow up and issue out to their respective public duties in life insensible to a feeling which has heightened the glory of the greatest men and most accomplished princes, and soon finding and appreciating a knowledge of design as a guide to the appreciation of beauty a necessary part of the education of a gentleman,—which they might have learnt long since from their favourite Aristotle,—they resign as they do their judgment to the accomplished connoisseur, or, what is a great deal worse, the sagacious academician.

As governments must regulate the national expenditure on all objects in which they consider themselves justified to interfere for the national good, the first step should be to make themselves masters of the question in view; and the next the selection of the most competent persons to decide on the plan offered, and the persons to execute them, without regard to rank. Here comes knowledge as the basis, judgment as the guide, and taste for the selection; but if no knowledge has been inculcated, no judgment been matured, and no taste refined in the education of those who form the tribunal, how is the nation to be benefitted by the result?

Not long ago, a youth of rank, who may one day perhaps form one of some future committee, saw in my painting-room a fine etching of Raffaele's Ananias. What is that? was the question. The death of Ananias! By whom?—Raffaele. Where is it? At Hampton Court. It is part of a set executed for tapestry by order of Leo X.

left in Flanders, recommended to Charles I. by Rubens, who bought them, and they were bought in after by order of Cromwell at the royal sale, &c.

At all this he was really pleased ; but had there been tutors at the Universities, all this he would have known before he left College.

Where an object of mere utility is wanted, a break-water for a harbour for instance, and taste is out of the question, we rival the Romans : but in all public works which depend on genius and taste, we have hitherto been almost inferior to the Goths of Alaric or Attila.

The writer alluded to at first, proceeds to say—" We hate schemes ; for every one you propose twenty will arise ; but we repeat the suggestion we have given before, that nothing would so much improve the public taste and raise artists to the most honourable condition, as the establishments of professorships of painting, sculpture, and architecture at the Universities.

" The chief advantages that we see in this is, that the youth of England who attain the highest education, would, at their most docile years, acquire a taste and a love of art, and consequently become judicious patrons. It would tend greatly to rescue them from lower or frivolous pursuits, too often the resource of those who have nothing to do.

" But," proceeds he, " we would invariably have the professors *Masters of Arts*, a peculiar degree, on examination, conferred on students ; a school of painting should be annexed, and design, in which lectures should be given, and the beauties of celebrated works pointed out, and the art practised by those who wished it."

Even if nothing more, I add, is accomplished by the most disposed of our young men at College *than drawing*

the figure in common proportion, let them rest *only* on that, they will go to the state better able to appreciate excellence, more alive to the beauty of form, and more fit to give advice on any public work, than any who have issued from its walls for the last 200 years.

Aristotle says, in the third Chapter of the 8th book of *Politicks*, as quoted by Mr. Hamilton in his Pamphlet on the Houses of Parliament, wherein surely he does not spare the class he belongs to,—Aristotle says:—"All were taught *γραμματα* or literature, gymnastics and music, and many *την γραφικην*, or the art of design, as being useful, and abundantly useful, to the purposes of life; but mainly because it enables us to appreciate the respective merits of distinguished artists, and carries us to the contemplation of *real* beauty; as letters," he adds, "which are the *elements* of calculation, terminate in the contemplation of truth."

Again, Castiglione, the friend of Raffaelle, in his *Cortigiano*, says: "Before I undertake this, there is one thing I desire to speak of, which, because in my judgment it appears of importance, ought by no means to be omitted in the character of our perfect statesman, and that is, *skill in drawing*, and a competent knowledge in the very art of painting: nor think it strange that I require this skill in a statesman, which in these days is looked upon as mechanical, and little becoming a gentleman."

These days were Raffaelle's days. But Aristotle does not say so: he knew a school was established at Sicyon, of which Pamphilus was the great head, where the highest born and best educated were instructed. The Greeks did not think it mechanical, they knew the power of design was a sixth sense, and enlarged the sphere and purity of human enjoyment; cultivated the perception of beauty

and elevated the sensibility of the being to whom it had been gifted by God.

I do not address these remarks to the people of Britain, because they are all convinced of the importance of design, and are gasping for information and for great works ; but to those most particularly, who, from the degrading blow the art received at the Reformation in Religion, and the degrading position of all historical painters since, have been taught to consider the art of no earthly service but to perpetuate the resemblance of themselves and their lovely families ; who hear nothing of it at College, think frivolously of it in after life, and upon the whole are more inclined than not to think meanly of artists, though they do more for art than any other class.

The young men in high life talk of a man in such or such a street, who makes a devilish good likeness and cheap, as they would of Hoby the boot-maker, or Stultz, who cuts a coat. In a great measure this has been generated by the moral effect which the despotism of the Academy has engendered. Men in art are become so utterly timid, that young men of fashion and spirit, who shoot, hunt, and steeple chase, have a species of contempt for the timid, pale-faced aspirant for its honours, afraid even of the echo of their own walls, lest it might endanger their own election. Talk of the struggles of the historical painter ! here you have the consciousness of a great effort for the honour of your country—and are not condemned to make people not as they look in their best look, but as they wish God Almighty had made them. “ My hair was not *this* colour at *sixteen*,” said a venerable man of eighty-two. “ I dare say not, sir.” “ I don’t see any harm at being made fifteen years younger,” said an aged person to Opie, “ I was very slender at twenty.” All characters then

become smoothed : the energy, the vigour, the honesty of expression in the heads of Vandyke and Titian, would not be endured now. Think of the energy of Strafford's look by Vandyke, which you all remember. At such a portrait now, Almack's, band and all, would go into hysterics ! In one noble lord's head was the finest brow for age, rank, and elevated defiance I ever saw. While I was making a careful study, and had seized at once the fine natural, independent curl that it made over his piercing eye, a friend was looking over me : " It would not be so, Mr. Haydon, when his lordship is dressed for dinner, you know ? " Think of smoothing Strafford's brow for dinner ! I dare say the manners were grosser in Titian and Vandyke's time, they poisoned and stilettoed, but they bore truth in art, and character in look, with much more manliness than the fastidiousness of modern manners can endure. " We now lessen to beautify," said Lawrence to me. Yes, thought I, but Titian enlarged to elevate. This is the distinct difference between the periods ;—now every thing is delicate, smooth, polished—essence. Then, every thing was fierce, frank, and violent ; men were the bitterest enemies or the most impassioned friends ; they were models of virtue, or the greatest villains on earth.

Even the instrument of murder is altered—the stiletto has sunk into a pen ! Blood is vulgar—stab not the body, but ruin the character !

Out of these materials for fifty years have proceeded *our* tribunals of art ! First and foremost, for several years, was our celebrated Committee of Taste ! Their formation was owing to the very best intentions of the government ; the ministry themselves, from their want of education, felt their incompetency to decide, and the Academy had given

them so much trouble on all questions referred to them, they that thought, by leaving such matters to gentlemen of unquestioned honour and reputed taste, they were likely to get sound advice, and the nation be protected from the absurdities that had so often encumbered them: the error was, confining the Committee to one class, and never appealing to the public or the artist—the only, the surest guides in the world. Guides the ancients invariably consulted.

The absurdities this Committee were guilty of will hardly *now* be credited: in settling who should be employed to do this or that monument, they often bargained with the successful candidate to reinforce his group with a figure from the group which had been unsuccessful; and thus a figure has been taken from a bad group to spoil a good one!

This was the basis of all the absurdities in St. Paul's; for the sculptors became so indifferent, that, to my certain knowledge, a pupil of a celebrated one cut away accidentally the great part of the middle knuckle of a hand! In a great fright, he called out to his master, what's to be done? The master replied, never mind, the Committee will never find it out! Now had the Committee been taught to draw at College, they would have found it out, nor would the pupil have dared to be careless. Though there was a great disposition among the sculptors to job, when one considers how their best arrangements were disregarded there is really some excuse for their disgust. The consequence was, the trade feeling came into play; the whole art became an affair of manufactory, and productions which might have been executed to rival Phidias were prostrated into contract jobs.

One of the sculptors* took a partner into his *business*. Fancy Messrs. Phidias, Michael Angelo, and Co. *begging leave to inform their friends and the public in general, that, ever anxious to deserve a continuance of that patronage with which for years P. and M. have been so distinguished by a discerning public——!*

Oh, the glorious effects of an incompetent tribunal! Without a tribunal, nothing can be accomplished; and this will take us at once to what was the practice of the Greeks, when public works seemed to have been an honour to all concerned—artists, people, and judges.

In all matters of decision, where genius, honour, and glory were concerned, it is interesting to reflect on the solemn sincerity, the intense devotion, the inspired love of justice, which seemed to animate this wonderful and highly gifted nation.

The most important contests for glory were the Olympic Games: art, music, poetry, were all judged. At this immortal assemblage kings entered the lists. Nations respected the decision of the tribunal appointed, and if they refused to abide by a just decision, they were excluded till they acknowledged their error, and paid the fine.

And what was the result? The highest powers of body and mind were elicited at these contests, because every one gifted in art, poetry, music, or physical strength, *knew* that *if* he deserved the olive crown, no partiality, no jobbing—no nephew of the judge's sister, or first cousin of the judge's wife—would deprive him of his due.

Every being did his best, and if his *best* failed, he had

* Bacon.

a conscious conviction it was because he had been honestly and honourably beaten by a better.

It is astonishing, if once entire confidence exist between judge and competitor, to what a degree this confidence affects the competition ; what a spring it gives to the mind and body, and how honestly every thing is done ; and if no confidence exist from repeated experience, it is wonderful how half the faculties of body and soul succumb under the impression !

Napoleon said, if the moral feeling of an army was in favour of a campaign, it was equal to 40,000 men ; and I believe it.

Depend on it, we shall have nothing but National Galleries, and Buckingham immortalities, if we do not reform our Tribunals of Art to something like the common sense and justice of the Greeks ; and restore that moral confidence to painters, sculptors, and architects, which has literally gone out in the professions.

The Olympic Games* are universally acknowledged to have subsisted before the use of chronological dates and records ; and the record of the Olympic conquerors, after their restoration, is the first known chronological date ; Pausanias says they were celebrated every fifth year—(that is, they were celebrated on the fifth year after the fourth year had passed)—and Sir Isaac Newton is of opinion that they were originally instituted in triumph for victories. Why the Olympic games had always the preference there is no knowing, but certainly the Grand Statue of Jupiter at Elis must have had a great influence.

* West's Pindar, vol. iii.; Paus. lib. v.

Now comes *their* competent tribunal ; and compare the vast difference between *ours* and *theirs*.

The right of presiding at the Olympic games was attended with such dignity and power, that the Eleans, who had been in possession of it from the earliest times, were more than once obliged to maintain their right by force of arms.

After several disputes about the number of Presidents or Judges (Hellanodicks) they remained at the original number of ten ; and Pausanias says, for ten months preceding the games, they dwelt together at Elis in a house appointed for them, and from thence called the Hellanodiceum.

During these months they qualified themselves for the high and important office of judges of all Greece, as their title infers ; for which end they were carefully instructed in every particular of their duty by a set of officers called the Guardians of the Laws ; and they attended daily in the Gymnasium, upon the preparatory exercises of all those who were admitted candidates for the Olympic crown.

These were obliged to enter their names at least ten months before that festival, and to employ part if not the whole of their time at Elis in exercising themselves.

The time of preparation was not more serviceable to the candidates than to the presidents, who were by these means furnished with frequent opportunities of trying their own abilities, exerting their own authority, and sliding, as it were imperceptibly, into the exercise of that office, which, as it placed them on a tribunal to which all Greece was subject, exposed them at the same time to the observation and scrutiny of a most awful and numerous

assembly, whose censure they could not hope to escape but by the most exact and strictest impartiality.

But as there are other requisites for obtaining the character of a wise and important judge, besides knowledge, they took all imaginary care to prevent their judgments from being biassed, by prohibiting any of their colleagues from contending in the equestrian exercises; by making it a law to themselves, under the sacred obligation of an oath, to proceed according to the strictest equity in those cases wherein they were left to their consciences alone. This oath was solemnly sworn before the statue of Jupiter upon their finishing the examination of the competitors.

Another check on the Hellanodicks was the liberty allowed to any one who thought himself aggrieved of appealing to the Senate at Elis.

They had also the power of excommunicating whole nations, which gave them vast dignity and authority among the several people of Greece.

An Athenian found guilty of corruption was fined. The Athenians refused to submit and were excluded from the Games, nor were they forgiven till they paid the penalty.

It is extraordinary to see the awe and respect paid to the decisions of these men: if one nation, like the Lacedemonians, became impertinent or refractory, others immediately took up arms and forced them to submit.

The candidates were strictly examined as to their virtuous descent, and own moral life; and when they passed in review down the stadium, a herald demanded with a loud voice in all the assembly, "Is there any one who can accuse this man of any crime?—is he a robber?—is he a slave?—is he wicked?—is he depraved?"

Themistocles once at this ceremony stood up, and objected to Hiero, King of Syracuse, because he was a tyrant,—a name odious to the democracies of Greece; and there could not be a stronger evidence of their utter detestation of the name, than refusing a king to contest because he was a tyrant; thus placing him on a level with a slave bought or sold, and who could not by law be admitted.

The candidates having passed in review with honour, were then sworn sacredly they had done all required: they were admitted to the contest, and then marched to the stadium, attended by all their friends, connections, and families, encouraging them to do their best, and praying the gods to bless their exertions.

They were then left for the fight, and, if even beaten, they had the honour left of being thought worthy for the combat.

What a beautiful sight it must have been, and what a beautiful picture it would make for any public Institute, as an excitement to youth! The finest composition of Barry's, at the Adelphi, is his Olympic Game.

To excite the emulation of the competitors by placing in their view the objects of their ambition, the wild olive crowns, with branches of palm, were placed before their eyes on tripods, and being again summoned by proclamation, and crowned by the heralds, they were led along preceded by trumpets, their names loudly proclaimed before the vast assembly.

On their return to their native city, they entered it through a breach of the walls, drawn in chariots: and such was the high feeling engendered by these games, that when Alexander the Great wanted to contest, he was

refused because he was a Barbarian, nor was he allowed, till he proved his descent from an ancient family in Argolis.

“ In the Republic of the Fine Arts (says an execrably written preface to the Catalogue of the Houses of Parliament Designs), competition is the great source of excellence ; but so to frame instructions and invite competition as to secure all the attainable talent, and so to form a tribunal as to derive all possible benefit for the public, and to do justice to the competitors, have been matters of great difficulty in all ages and in all countries.”

No doubt of it : but let no tribunal ever come to any decision before the public feeling has been decidedly got. I would always have the public feeling ascertained first, and then the decision of the tribunal.

The whole history of ancient art shews the estimation in which the unsophisticated judgment of the public was always held. Aristotle says,* “ The multitude is the secret judge of the productions of art : if you do not get the applause of the public, says some other, what celebrity can you attain ? ” Cicero makes the public supreme judge.†

And it is extraordinary, that in the highest qualities of “ high art,”—expression and telling a story—the instinctive feeling of the untutored multitude is to be preferred often to the delusion of mere artists themselves.

Moliere’s old woman is a capital principle ; and, if I may be allowed to allude to an anecdote of my own practice, I had once a capital illustration during the painting of the Judgment of Solomon.

An old woman, who was sitting for the last group,

* De Rep. l. iii. c. 7.

† De Orat. c. 49.

continually turned round and kept looking at the distracted and good mother, who was finished, and rushing forward to save her child! At last, my venerable old model said, "Poor soul, how frightened she is!"

I felt at once this would be the decision of the public. I had touched the human heart! Perhaps I ought not to conceal, that West, at sight of the same figure, was affected to tears.

I am now painting a small picture of Falstaff and Hal: a servant girl, in passing before the picture after lighting the fire, stopped, and began to laugh, and was overheard to say, "What a dear old gentleman!" Depend on it, Mrs. Quickly could not have paid me a higher compliment.

I may perhaps be granted permission to say, I make a practice of admitting all classes during the progress of every work. Rely on it, it is the best plan: you hear all opinions, and you are prevented nursing up some imaginary beauty, which public feeling will condemn, and which you would have found out to have been an error had it been continually subject to remark before-hand.

Reynolds doubts if a picture should be shown in progress: I say, always: I disapprove in toto of that hoarding up a work—the favourite practice of some artists—and I inculcate on all my pupils its danger and its impropriety. As Reynolds says, if the commonest workman mistakes a shadow for dirt, it is not true to nature; and rely on it, if the merest apprentice boy does not seem affected by an expression, it is not sufficiently powerful or touching. These are the most unsophisticated judges, and should always be admitted, and listened to, as well as the most refined.

It is evident from facts that the Athenians were more

scrupulous in the selection of their judges than that of architects or artists whose merits the judges were called to judge.

The inequality of civil rights, not political, and the aristocratic principles of modern times, have made patronage all-powerful, and popular interference of little avail; though we are fast, I think, verging to do things in the face of the public, having suffered so bitterly by doing them behind their backs for these last seventy years.

The French exceed us in the importance they give to public decisions in all matters of art.

When a distinguished General's* monument was concerned, after a public exhibition was made of eight days, a tribunal was appointed of Generals, Deputies, Architects, and Artists—belonging to the Institute and not belonging.

The Generals and Deputies soon withdrew, not finding themselves competent to decide on an art which they had not studied.

The Commission, thus reduced to artists, proceeded to decide. First they took out 15 of the 25 designs—then 5 of the 10 left—then 3 out of the 5—and then they selected the very best of the 3. So was it honourably, carefully, and scrupulously decided by the French tribunal; and no man could complain.

Compare this method with our method, as reported in the examination of the architect of settling our National Gallery.

In an interesting examination of an architect by the Committee, in answer to the question, "Will you favour the Committee with your views of the Constitution of a

* Foi.

proper Tribunal?" he replied, that the first step would be, an appeal to the public: that, of course, said he, will elicit every variety of opinion and criticism, and give time for the heat of emulation to evaporate.

Then, in the next place, the old classical principle of giving to each artist competing a couple of votes, and he may have his name written on them, and he may give them to the first and second merit.

If his name is on the vote, he is accountable for the vote; you not only enlist his judgment, but you give him the opportunity of that additional merit; you will get in that way the opinion of persons certainly competent, because they have gone through all the study and detail, and must at once be struck, being experienced persons, with the successful solution of the problem.

The architect, in this interesting evidence, said, that a competitor might very well be permitted to challenge any individual of the jury, as in civil law, if he have reason to suspect there will be partiality or incompetency. In all architectural competitions there should be combined the opinion of persons celebrated in science to give judgment on sound or acoustics: (you see how very important the composition of a tribunal becomes, when we analyse what it ought to be composed of!) Then, for the artist part—that which relates to form, beauty, composition, and all belonging to art—you should have five of the best opinions: if it be relating to the Lords, twice as many Lords, and twice as many Commons: so that in this way you would get a judgment of all the accommodation wanted by those most interested; all the scientific part, and all that belongs to the fine arts.

The witness said, he feared that all tribunals hitherto, were composed, in England, from their rank and autho-

rity, more than from their talents or their competency to decide: not that all persons of skill and taste were excluded, but that the majority and the preponderance leaned to the influence of rank, rather than to artistical and scientific fitness.*

Do you any longer wonder at the superiority of the Greeks? Do you any longer wonder at the better management of the French, on all that concerns public works, where taste is concerned? Surely not. Who composed our Tribunals? Two or three venerable adorers of Dutch art, and Dutch boors, in preference to Raffaele or Titian, who wanted to press down the genius of the country to Dutch taste and Dutch subjects; who doated on portrait and hated high art; loved Jan Steen and sneered at Michael Angelo.

Depend on it, in surgery, as in art, no compromise must be made with a cancer! The want of professors of art at College is the basis of this condition. Art and its principles, its connection with religion, morals, and patriotism, its utility as a state engine, is never explained to the young statesman; and at this moment, speak of art as having a moral influence on the people, if properly managed by the state, and it is a chance if the great proportion at table would not think you insane members or ministers.

Contrast for a moment the solemn honesty of an Olympic tribunal, with the heartless frivolity of any of ours: first passing laws, and limiting the right to contest to certain conditions, and then, from caprice, rewarding those who had violated every condition laid down, to gratify a thirst for novelty, or a whim of fashion; and when reproached for having broken their own regulations,

* Cockerell, R. A. See Evidence.

taking shelter in a vulgar story of a Captain asking his Lieutenant what the clock was? "Eleven," said the officer. "I say it is twelve," replied the Captain. "No Sir, it is not, I assure you," said the Lieutenant. "Don't you know, Sir, I am the Captain, and *I say it is Twelve!*"

Such a story told at Elis, to palliate dishonour in the judges, would have cost the judges their lives, and they would have heartily deserved it. But it cannot last: the perpetual intercourse with the Continent; the contrast between the Continent and England; the dull "atmosphere morale," as Madame de Stael calls it, from the want of public art and public ornament, must strike all classes when they return, and in the end must work, as it is working, its reformation of taste in all classes.

"The want of elegant expenditure in the State," says Sir James Mackintosh, in a letter to Hopner, and quoted by Mr. Hamilton, and the enormous wealth of so many private persons, are obstacles which the English genius has to contend with,—"that the non-patronage of Government is useful or even harmless to the Fine Arts, is as much as to say, that an agreement not to wear woollens, entered into by men of fortune, would be useful or harmless to the manufacturers of broad cloth."

There have been *six** principal epochs in modern history, at each of which the knowledge of ancient art has made gigantic strides—the first was that in which the increased wealth and learning of the Italians in the age of Leo led the way, by excavations for palaces and churches, to the recovery of so many lost remains from the ruins and rubbish of Rome, which with the revival of literature, and the liberal patronage of the great, contributed to form the eminent artists of those days. The *second* was

* Mr. Hamilton: Pamphlet on Houses of Parliament.

the discovery of Herculaneum and Pompeii, which first brought us acquainted with the beautiful forms familiar to the ancients in their household utensils, and with specimens of their mural paintings, though these in truth were in part made known, when the palaces of the Cæsars, and the baths of Titus, were cleared in the sixteenth century. *Then came* the excavations in Hadrian's villa below Tivoli, the vases of Nola and of Magna Græcia, the speculations undertaken to excavate at Veii, and in the environs of the eternal city, and the contemporaneous munificence of Pius VI. the real founder of the Museum of the Vatican; together with the liberality of our own countrymen in purchasing some of the most precious monuments which these operations brought to light. The *fourth* epoch was marked by the visits of our learned travellers and artists to the ruins of Balbeck and of Athens, and of the lesser Asia, and by the successful publications of the Society of Dilettanti, rescued from the hands of barbarians, the chefs-d'œuvres of Phidias, which we had already begun to appreciate from drawings and measurements and engravings. The sixth and last great event of this character was the discovery of the tombs of the Greek inhabitants of parts of Etruria: and the last fifteen years have produced from this rich and still unexhausted mine, proofs of the extensive range and high quality of Greek art, which we could not have gleaned from history, and which are furnishing us with more data, whence to pursue our reciprocal illustrations of art by literature, and literature by art, than all which we possessed before.

These are a few of the points to which the attention of the youth of our *upper classes* ought to be directed; and when we add to a knowledge of such historical details, a familiarity with the works of the ancients, either by casts

or engravings, and the literary labours of those, who have best illustrated these triumphs of genius ; and have accompanied the whole with a study of the chief characteristics of the Greek and Roman medals and lapidary inscriptions, the best correctors and lights of history, geography, mythology, and archæology in general ; we may then hope to see a genuine feeling for beauty in art pervade *those classes*, which ought to give the tone, and perform the part of judges and protectors to others, who look up to them for employment, for such as is the demand such will be the supply ; and if those who are to guide know and put in practice the rules of *culture*, the production will reward them for their toil, and reflect honour on the hand which reared it. Though the canon of Polycletus may exist only in history, and there is no living evidence of the triumph of Apelles, yet the Parthenon for the purposes of a model answers all our inquiries. We know what the Greeks considered the most beautiful of their edifices ; we have positive proof what they thought the most beautiful of their sculpture, and we know that as long as they were free agents, they adhered to principles which were as imperishable and as firm as those of *law and justice*—not so much sanctioned by *opinion*, as *ingrafted* in them by a *philosophical attention to the formations of nature* ; though varying at times in the application of *details*, yet so *rigidly* were harmony and proportions attended to, that in their productions, as in those of the natural world, it might be almost said, that any one single part makes us acquainted with the whole, as the whole is implied in each individual member. We *know* too that in proportion as each succeeding age *deviated from the prototype*, they fell into every species of abuse. The Romans first, then the Lombards, Normans,

Goths, and other barbarians, took their several lines of departure in various directions: each flattered himself that he was *improving* on what had gone before, and each wandered further from the right road."

Thus, do what we will, struggle as you please to vary from the Greeks, is to be wrong. Why? Because their art is founded in nature, in painting and sculpture, poetry and oratory, in architecture they are equally based; and what public speeches equal those of Demosthenes?

Their reverence for genius has never altogether been extinct since on the Continent; *here* it is different; here genius is nothing, and property all in all. A man of genius in Great Britain is a cat in the streets, a bird on the wing, which every blockhead to show his skill pelts as he passes, or brings down by a shot.

In Greece, in Italy, in France, and in Germany, it is extraordinary the higher feeling that is apparent for every one that is connected in art. But is not this in a great measure owing to the artists themselves? Do they not take up art as a trade? have they the enthusiasm of the French and Germans—especially the Germans?

I cannot conceive how our nobility can go abroad, see every church, hall, palace, gallery, teeming with pictures, and come back and forget all; and bury immediately their feeling and their taste in junction railways, and mining speculations for copper or coal. The moment they touch the English shore, the moment they scent the fog of London, all the feelings of Italy and Greece are considered the delusions of a beautiful dream! This won't do in England; *here it will never do!* Oh no, *here* we must look into our stewards' accounts, *here* we must examine the premium of our shares, *here* we must shake hands with the electors, for a dissolution is coming. Who

is the favourite at Tattersall's for the Spring meeting? What is the newest club? Greece and Italy cross their memories, but only to be banished by the stern duties of Lord Lieutenant, Custos Rotulorum, or presiding magistrate of a country toll.

But why cannot these things be combined? Why must taste and refinement never do in this country, because turnpikes must be paid? Why? The old reply: No tutors at College.

Point out to men of rank at College the principles of form, explain to them as a pleasure the beauties of the greatest works, show them the connection in the greatest statesmen, between utility and refinement, knowledge and love of beauty, nature and fine arts, and do you believe this state of things would last? In ten years it would be said no longer with truth, that of all subjects which come before Committees of both Houses, art is that one the least understood!

This education in form so essential to the education of a refined man, so essential to the mechanic, so essential to the artist, so essential to all classes, was adapted as a permanent principle by the Greeks, as I have shown you.

Though Reynolds nobly held up high art as *alone* worthy of pursuit, yet I have stories of him, from his friends, which show he did not press high art, if he saw it was unpopular in high quarters.

He was an extremely politic and well-bred man, and was never off his guard as to what would interfere with his personal interest.

A friend of mine, the late Sir W. Beechy, was with him once, when a lady of the highest rank was announced. Sir Joshua had painted her, and went to her into his

gallery, with his palette in his hand, without delay. Sir Joshua had painted her, and she thought not successfully: she assailed him at once, with the bewitching raillery and sarcasm of a woman of fashion; and Sir Joshua, who had from a cold caught in the Vatican become rather deaf, affected not to understand her. In fact, Reynolds made this deafness a very great convenience, for he never heard any thing he did not like to hear.

"My portrait is not at all like, Sir Joshua!" said this beauty. Reynolds, bowing to the earth, replied, with his hand to his ear, "I am delighted your Grace is pleased with it!" "Pleased! I am really not at all pleased," said she. "I am quite delighted," bowed Reynolds. "Good God!" said she to my friend, "do make this man understand I don't like it." Beechy shrunk from the task, when in came an artist she knew, and she instantly entreated him to get Sir Joshua out of his error. Up went this impudent miniature-painter, and roaring into Sir Joshua's ear, said: "Her Grace does—not—think—her—portrait—like—Sir Joshua." "Not think it like!"—replied Reynolds,— "Not like!"—then, bowing, said in the mildest voice, as if heard for the first time,— "Then we'll make it like—we'll make it like!" This is an epitome of his whole life, in fashion.

Sir George Beaumont was Sir Joshua's intimate friend; and he had great traces of Sir Joshua. I used to see him every day, whilst painting "Jerusalem;" he has sat behind me for hours during my painting; and it required all one's philosophy to resist his propositions; for up he would get in the middle of a head or piece of drapery, and say, had you not better try this? and out of his pocket he would take a piece of gum quackery—and he thought, saying Sir Joshua was fond of it, made it infallible,

when that was the very reason it ought not to have been tried. Then Sir George would propose white of egg—then this gum, then that gum; in fact he gave one a complete idea of Sir Joshua's habits. Once he told me, Sir Joshua put a portrait of a young lady to dry by the fire; some soot fell down and covered all her neck. Sir George thought all was lost. Sir Joshua snatched up the picture, and saying it would make a capital half-tint, rubbed the whole into the half-tint of the neck, and made a beautiful colour.

It is a pernicious practice to make a picture dry by the fire; it is extremely problematical if cracking be not the result. But to conclude.

With respect to the games of the ancients, especially the Olympian, you must not estimate them as you would an English horse-race or steeple-chase. They had a much higher object, though the feelings of honourable emulation engendered by our contests of that sort tend to noble struggles for superiority.

The Greeks wished to make their diversions susceptible of high feelings, heroically and morally: hence the solemnity of the tribunal, the severity of the law, the care in the selection, the pomp in the rewards, a wise and prudent state may dispose a people to such enjoyment as will render them more serviceable to the public good, and by honouring those who excel in any virtuous contest, whether poets, painters, sculptors, musicians, soldiers, sailors, husbandmen, or manufacturers, or wrestlers. Such an emulation is roused, as must promote industry, encourage trade, refine art, improve the knowledge and wisdom of mankind; and consequently make a country victorious in war, and in peace opulent, virtuous, and happy.

LECTURE XII.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

RELATIVE VALUE

OF

FRESCO AND OIL PAINTING.

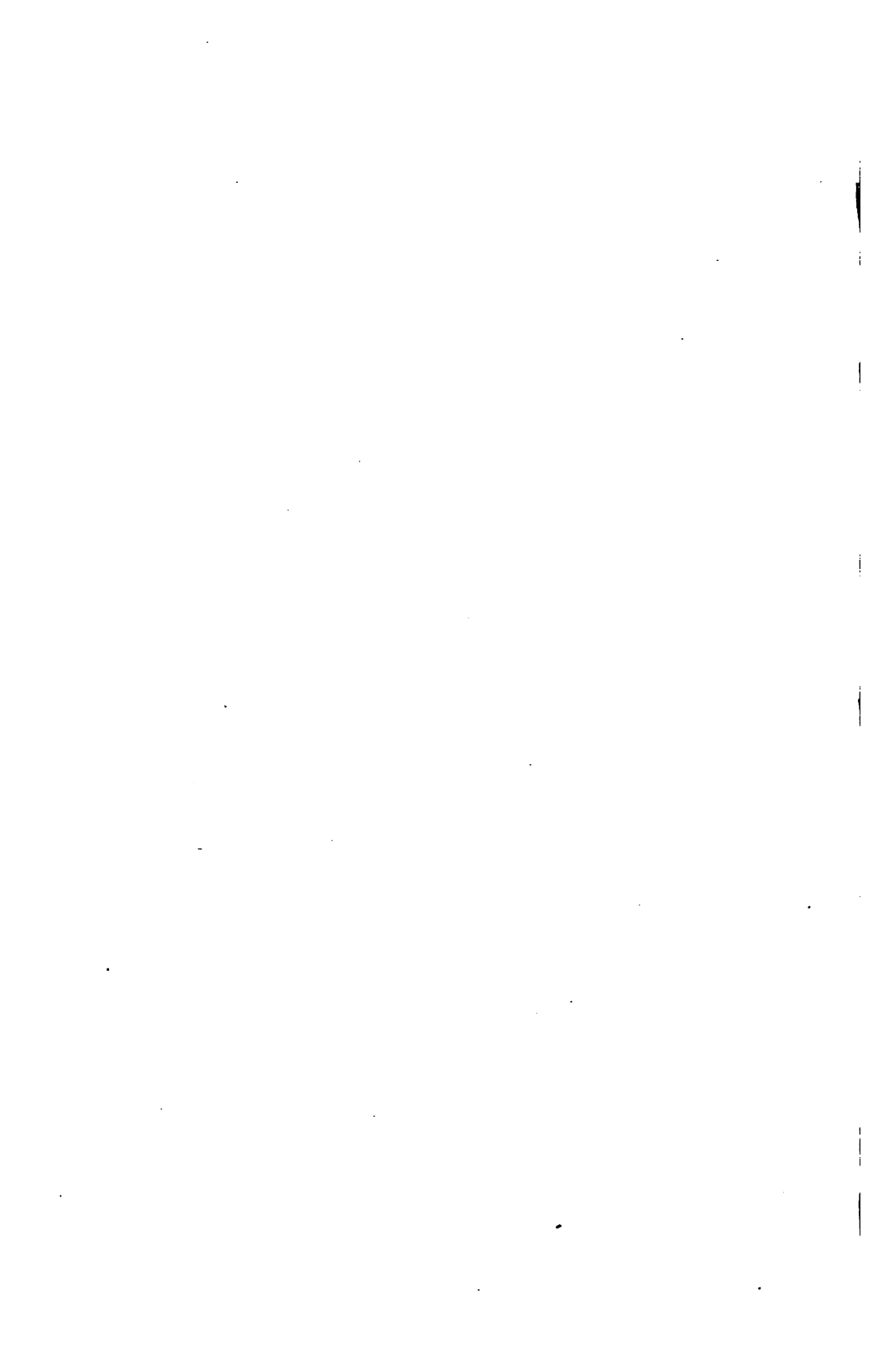
READ FIRST AT

THE FRIDAY EVENING MEETING

AT THE

ROYAL INSTITUTION, ALBEMARLE STREET,

MARCH 4, 1842.



LECTURE XII.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

BRITISH art never had higher prospects than at the end of the war :—The reform in drawing and essential detail, so much neglected by the imitators of Reynolds, had begun to take root ; the works of Wilkie had spread the reputation of the domestic school over Europe ; historical pictures of undoubted genius had refuted for ever the doubts of an Englishman's capacity to express passion or poetry :—our landscape, animals, fruit, flowers, still life, sea-views, portrait and water-colour painting, no continental school could at all approach ; and it is no exaggeration to say, that the shock given to continental art, by the power, the colour, the reality, the light and shadow, the impasto, the execution of the British school, in spite of gross defects in a knowledge of construction, gave the death-blow to the hideous school of David in France, which the predominating influence of Napoleon had made the school of Europe : from that instant to this hour, more colour, more nature, more simplicity, more truth, and less exaggeration, have characterised the French school, and have not been without their due effect on the rest of Europe. Canova

and Cicognara expressed to me, when in England, their wonder, that the only school of colour on earth was the *British*, and yet colour, said they, seems to require a brilliant climate, more than any other quality of element, for painting! So true it is, that the power of innate genius has never been obstructed by any deficiency of element or opposition of man, but has turned both difficulties and obstructions to honour and glory.

The advantage the continental school gained by intercourse with the British was more rapidly apparent, than the benefit the British school derived from continental connexion; *because*, the elements of continental education in art were sounder; every Frenchman *drew the figure*, understood its anatomical construction, and could more easily and more rapidly graft colour and light and shadow on the noble basis of *form*, than the British school could go back to the first elements of design, after sipping with relishing gusto the delights of touch and tone, impasto, and colour; still the recoil upon British art was beneficial, and an English exhibition exhibits at present far more correctness in *hands* and *feet*, far more firmness of form, than were visible in the mere imitators of Reynolds, thirty years ago; however slowly, design is progressing; it is progressing, and the moment it can be proved an artist of genius will be competently rewarded by devoting himself to *improve* the taste of the market, rather than supply its demand by conforming to its meretricious necessities, *that moment* the dignity of British art will rise, and a school ultimately be established, more perfect in aim, in practice, and in essence, than any since those of ancient Greece.

It is indisputable, that the various schools of Italy were all imperfect, however individually exquisite in their

separate aims ; the colour of the Venetians, the form of the Romans and Florentines, the light and shadow and impasto of Correggio, were only component parts of the perfection of art.

Painting is conveying *thoughts* by the imitation of *things* ; the more perfect the *thing* represented, the more impressive will be the *thought* conveyed. Reality, therefore, was the basis of Greek art in its finest days, and the separate excellencies of modern Italy were always combined in the works of ancient Greece. As each Italian school found out the error of its exclusive practice, each school tried to remedy its defects. Titian combined all the elements of reality in his Pietro Martyre, and Raffaele tried to do so in the Transfiguration ; Titian added form, Raffaele colour and tone, but Zeuxis, Apelles, Polygnotos, Protogenes, Euphranor, *always* did this ; and this is the principle of perfection which will *ultimately* be combined again in Britain.

Many changes have we yet to undergo before we settle ; we are now fast drifting to the upholstery school of David in our own small works, from an over anxiety to correct the excesses of the generalizing habits of Reynolds, from continental influence ; but after a short time, I have no doubt, the manly sense of the school will return again to the sound elements of Reynolds' *masses*, combined with a greater knowledge of construction ; and if the massings of Reynolds can be combined (as they can) with the correctness of Greek form and fine nature, that will be the style for great spaces and mighty halls ; for nothing will do in great spaces and mighty halls, but the leading elements of objects touched with unerring hand, leaving atmosphere to unite, to soften, and complete by distance.

All trifling lights and petty beauties would be lost and unseen.

The school of useless detail must be abandoned for ever; and the school of Titian and Correggio, and Tintoretto, be practised in execution; Michael Angelo, and Raffaele, in form and composition; for great names and great principles only, will do in great halls and great temples.

As early as the reign of Edward the Confessor, bas-reliefs were executed, quite equal to anything then done in any part of Europe.

In Alfred's time, and before, York and Canterbury were adorned with public pictures, and in the tenth century, Etheleda, widow of Burthwood, Duke of Northumberland, adorned Ely Cathedral with a series of historical pictures to illustrate his great deeds and famous actions.

In 1236, historical designs on their chamber-walls were the fashion of the king, court, and upper classes.

In 1250, the authorities of Florence sent for Greek artists, because there were no painters in the city, though English designers were then in full employ.

In 1350, the decoration of St. Stephen's Chapel commenced under the direction of Hugh de St. Albans.

"The king, to all and singular, the sheriffs, mayors, bailiffs, officers, and his other lieges: Know ye, that we have appointed our beloved Hugh de St. Albans, master of the painters, assigned for the works to be executed in our chapel at our palace of Westminster, to take and choose as many painters as may be required, and therefore we command you to be counselling the said Hugh, as often and in such manner the said Hugh may require." Then follows the following entry: "To H. de St. Albans,

ordering or designing the drawings for the painting, one day, one shilling." (25 Ed. III.)

In 1386, Wickliffe began to preach, and by the time the reformation was completed, the decoration of high art, as a principle worthy of state encouragement, being considered a portion of papal superstition, was considerably checked, and English historical painting received a *blow* it staggers under to this day. Historical decoration, however, still continued more or less fashionable, till Henry VIII., in his zeal against all the forms of popery, buried what was good with what was evil in the same grave; for it is impossible to be *just* in a sweeping reform; and during the reign of Elizabeth, design as a part of public ornament and state encouragement, are indirectly referred to in a debate, as things passed by and to be regretted.

Sir William Monson, in his account of the acts of Elizabeth, published in 1632, states, that a dispute being brought by petition before the House, by the Chartered Society of Painters, a member said, (in alluding to the design of St. Stephen's Chapel)—"These walls thus curiously painted in *former ages*—these images so perfectly done, *do witness* our forefathers' care in cherishing this art of painting."

This extract from the debate on the painters' petition proves, that in Elizabeth's reign, the decoration of public buildings by art *was over*, and was alluded to by the members as a glory and beauty passed by; and the bill to remedy the particular grievance of the moment was passed with this remark, "that the practice of decorating public buildings was a *wise* practice, and this wise practice the reformation destroyed.

In the same reign, Nicholas Hillier says, "Men induced

by nature to high art, have been made poorer, like the most rare English drawers of story works."

Englishmen then did invent and did design, and I can assure you, what they did design was, in many respects, equal to what the rest of Europe could execute in their day.

This rapid sketch from authentic documents was a necessary preface to the sequel.

It is clear we were advancing side by side by the continental nations—it is clear designers and inventors were prolific—it is clear an Englishman was the designer of the painting on the wall of St. Stephen's—it is clear that the violence of the early reformers threw us off our balance, whilst the nations on the continent were advancing in the practical course of art, and practical superstition, till Masaccio, Lionardo, Michael Angelo, Georgione, and Titian appeared. It is indisputable, that portrait, while it preserved the art from decay, got naturally so much the upper hand, that the careful investigation of the construction of the human figure was neglected in the hurry to supply the demands of sitters; and that now the intention existing and expressed by the last and present government to decorate the Houses of Parliament, is but a revival of a public system of patronage and practice, which existed five hundred years ago in as much perfection as in any other state abroad, and on this very spot where it is now determined to revive it.*

* Such was the state of art between Kneller and Hogarth, that the portrait painters used to send their whole lengths to Bath by waggon, to have the figure drawn in by a Dutchman, and then sent back again. This I had from Prince Hoare, on the authority of his father, who was a painter settled at Bath, and when the Dutchman died, Hogarth caricatured the painters going to his funeral.—B.R.H.

There was no doubt *then* of the genius of Britain. Henry III. and Edward III. had the most manly reliance on the capacity of their subjects; and by that honourable confidence, a work was produced, which contained figures equal to any which decorate the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa, and of admirable nature and action.

To disbelieve in the power of Britons in art is a modern refinement; to attribute the long sleep of high art to a *natural* incapacity, and not to a local obstruction, is kept alive rather than checked, as it ought to be, by the talent of the press.

The moment some Englishmen set their foot on the continent, the moment they leave the white cliffs of their father-land, they seem to doubt whether England *really* be the great country they believed her; they fear India does not belong to her, and the Cape has ceased to be governed by her; they question if the Duke's battles in the Peninsula were more than lucky accidents, or Waterloo anything but a splendid mistake.

But, it is replied, the Houses of Parliament are to be decorated in fresco, and what practice have British artists in that style?

As much practice, I reply, as the Germans had when in Rome they began to paint the walls of Bertholdy's house! And will any man have the hardihood to assert, that there is anything any other nation can do, or has done, which, with equal advantages, is beyond our reach?

And what are these tremendous difficulties of fresco?

Oh! it is replied, you must paint dark, because it dries light. Granted, and in oil you paint light, when you glaze dark. There is no more difficulty in one than the other.

I know no more *difficulties* in fresco than in oil ; but I know a great *many more nuisances*.

You proceed on a great historical picture in oil as you proceed in fresco ; you make a finished sketch, in which everything is settled ; you make separate studies of head, hands, feet, drapery ; you do the same in fresco, and a cartoon of the whole the full size is also necessary, but not always.

Frescos were executed in 498 and 795 in Rome, and in St. John Lateran there is a head of Christ still to be seen which shows great feeling.

Fresco (which is the immediate object of this discourse) is the art of painting, with natural colours of earth ground in water, on the last coat of mortar and sand, which the plasterer puts on, as he finishes the rooms of a house in the progress of building. When the walls are finished, and the house covered in, you will observe, in any of the new squares in London, the plasterer covers all the walls first with a rough coat of ox-hair and mortar, and then crosses with the trowel.

When this coat is *freshly* dry, the *second* coat is put on, less rough, but roughed a little in circles, when spread, to hold the last coat. And when this second coat is *freshly* dry, *not too dry*, then fine-sifted river-sand and fine lime are mixed in certain proportions, and polished with water and a hand-board ; and on this last coat, when polished, you paint, dipping your brush in water and lime, and rapidly developing your composition. In four or five hours the coat begins to DRY, and THAT is your signal for *ceasing*.

When dry, there is no correction to be made, (but you can correct when drying,) and therefore everything must be first settled, in what is called a Cartoon, (from Car-

tone, a large sheet of paper,) the same size as the extent of wall on which you are to paint.

You do only as much as you can finish in a day, tracing off your composition, bit by bit, and putting as much of it as can be done in a day on the mortar, and marking the outline with a point of hard wood, which leaves its trace on the wet mortar.

This is a rapid outline of fresco. Nothing can be simpler, and nothing easier, when the figure is mastered ; as lime whitens the colour in drying, you use your colours much darker than they dry, as in oil you paint flesh much lighter when you glaze ; the difficulty is equal. You may lay it down as a law, if fresco when wet looks well, it will look ill when dry.

The modes of imitating nature in the great schools of painting have been four : viz. tempera, encaustic, fresco, and oil. The general practice of the Greeks was tempera, intensely varnished ; encaustic was the exception ; fresco, it is clear, they practised, and oil and wax they varnished with.

For tempera, colours are ground in water, and worked with the yolk of egg thinned with vinegar, to prevent putrefaction. Wax was the vehicle of encaustic, liquified by fire, used hot with the brush on ships, and when cooled after liquefaction, used cool for tabular works, and amalgamated by fire again, or by a heated stylus alone. The use of fire to amalgamate wax, or the use of the cauterion, authorized the term *εγκαυσεν*, (burnt in) ; in particular instances some colours were ultimately varnished with wax and oil. This varnish was afterwards heated by a cauterion, which held live coals, until it frothed, then rubbed with waxed candles, and finally with white napkins ; and the polish was exquisite.

The practice on walls with the brush was quite different from the practice on miniatures, or tabular easel works, because when Pausias, a tabular painter in encaustic, was employed to repair the great works of Polygnotos at Thespiæ, he was to use the brush; and he FAILED, because the brush was not his accustomed instrument.

Working encaustic with the stylus was, therefore, totally different to working on wall with a brush; and Pliny is wrong in saying the brush was invented after the stylus. We have Egyptian brushes perhaps much older than Greek art; and how was the ark covered with melted pitch inside and out? The Egyptians used tempera inside their tombs, and the colours on the outside of their great temples have stood for hundreds of years there, from the dryness of the climate: I do not know the material, though it may be tempera.

For fresco, colours are also ground in water. Oil needs no explanation.

When the material and vehicle are settled, the next point, and one of great importance, is the ground on which the colours are to be placed. The Egyptians painted in tempera on a white ground, perhaps of marble dust; the Greeks on a ground of finely powdered marble. The white grounds were carried on through the dark and middle ages, and were used by the Italians, whilst they painted on wood—gesso, or plaster, being the material; but when they began to use canvas alone, gesso being liable to crack in rolling, they made a ground of flour and oil.

The ground of fresco is of course the last coat of mortar put on; but if possible the materials of the ground for fresco, (imbibing as it does, in fact crystallising, the colours,) are of more importance in fresco, than either in

tempera, oil, or encaustic. The sand, the lime, and the water, cannot be too pure. Rain water, or distilled water, I would undoubtedly prefer. The sand must be sifted to a beautiful powder, the lime ground and crushed till it becomes a butter or a jelly.

The grounds in oil are either mixed with oil or water.

If water, they absorb the oil out of the first coat of colour put on ; if oil, there is no absorption.

The ground of fresco being water, and lime, and sand, is absorbent. The Italians called the white ground of course "Luce di dentro," (light within); and the great colourists in oil never, in their darkest tints, lose the effect of the light within, which is the great secret of the clearness of the shadows, in Titian, Veronese, Rubens, and Rembrandt. The light within is the great source of purity both in oil and in fresco ; but in oil it clears both light and shadow, while in fresco the power of the lime renders shadow always faint and powerless, but in light colours gives a radiance like the sun.

I have said that in fresco there are a great many useless nuisances : these deserve not the name of difficulties, as they are a mere trial of patience ; though the practice of fresco is not to be preferred because of the nuisances to be vanquished.

The art of decoration which has the most advantages and the least nuisances ought surely to be adopted.

All the great fresco painters, except Michael Angelo, seemed to have ended their labours in oil ; and the Venetians, from the useless obstructions of fresco, to have given it up.

But notwithstanding these authorities, the power of light, which the reflection of lime produces, shining

through the colours placed on it, renders fresco, in spite of its deficiency of shadow, fitter for public decoration than oil, whose power lies in its gorgeous shadow.

The power of fresco lies in light—the power of oil in depth and tone. Oil is luminous in shadow—fresco in light.

A mighty space of luminous depth and “darkness visible” gives a murky splendour to a hall or public building.

A mighty space of silvery breadth and genial fleshiness, with lovely faces, and azure draperies, and sunny clouds, and heroic forms, elevates the spirits, and gives a gaiety and triumphant joy to the mind. The less shadow in decoration the better.

Fresco is not desirable, because it is practised on a despotic material, and therefore requires a resolute and unerring hand, a fixed eye, and steady brain. It is desirable for its beauties, not for its obstructions. It is more difficult to paint with your feet than your hands; but that is no reason such a process is desirable. It would be better for fresco, if lime had the facilities of oil. It would be no disadvantage to be able to work up and retouch like Rembrandt, but it is not to be rejected because you cannot do it.

You must take the process as it is; and as it has been done effectually by Italians and Greeks, as it has been effectually used as an engine by the modern Germans, though far from the perfection of Raffaele, there is no reason on earth why it may not be also adopted by the British school.

If our first attempts be timid, so were Raffaele's and Michael Angelo's first attempts decided failures; yet an

advance will be made, for the very process of attempting will reform at once the careless, dashing, slovenliness of habit so common in oil practice.

Lime is the basis of the technical practice of fresco, chemically considered.

Every species of lime originates in limestone; and carbonic acid and stone are the original combinations chemically.

Burning the stone disengages the carbonic acid; by adding water we make the lime a hydrate of lime, and the result is a powder.

Hydrate of lime, sand, and water, in certain proportions, form the basis of stucco, on which fresco is painted.

The theory of stucco is the theory of induration. The lime has a tendency to combine carbonic acid from the air, and return to its original hardness, which depends on the lime and water cementing the fine particles of sand, which are not acted on, because sand is insoluble in such cases.

As colours are in reality tinted water, and as fresco and stucco have a tendency to imbibe water, colours ground in water become incorporated with lime, water, and sand; and when dry they are not to be dissolved again by water; and the basis of fresco and its colours thus become harder than the stone by drying. If the stucco dry too rapidly, as it always does in a hot climate, it does not dry through; and the hardness of the surface, from having imbibed carbonic acid from the atmosphere, hinders the interior from doing the same. The foundation of the stucco not being dry, very often, in its struggles to get at the carbonic acid, splits and blisters what has dried too soon over it as a skin.

This was the reason that Vasari and the Italian artists were continually obliged to moisten as they went on, and this is the reason why, in my opinion, the climate of England, being moist, is more adapted for fresco than Italy itself. Here, certainly, we have no chance of fresco drying too soon on the surface; but mortar dries here as hard as in Italy, and wherever mortar dries hard, there fresco may be safely practised.

All the cant about our climate is puerile and morbid, and the ingenious objections of a sect in England, who are alarmed at the prospect of a masterly style of design and thinking being established at last, are not to be regarded.

A few more words may be of use on the mode of preparing the one main expedient for painting in fresco.

Before lime is fit for this process, it must be entirely free of its acrid qualities, for if it be used before these are extinguished, the colours will get fainter and fainter till they perish altogether.

The Germans, after having experienced the fatal consequence, in their early experiments, of using lime too early and fresh, never paint now on any stucco in which the lime is less than three years old.

To get rid of the fiery tendencies of the lime, they reduce it to putty, then bury it, and keep it from the air for three years at least.

Being kept rather moist it imbibes a certain portion of carbonic acid, but remains far from the point of saturation; it also loses a great portion of its acrid qualities, which destroy colour, if, as I have just said, used too recently after slaking.

Vitruvius's proof that lime is well slacked is this: take a hatchet, he says, and cut into the lime as it lies slacked;

if any particles obstruct the hatchet it is not done enough; if the hatchet comes out pure and dry, it is weak and useless; but when rich and well slacked, it sticks about the instrument.

Vitruvius recommends three coats of sand and three of marble dust; the walls then become solid, and defy cracks.

When the mortar is reduced by beating with sticks, and the marble dust levigated to whiteness, it is fit for colours, which shine out with splendour. "For colours when carefully spread on wet plaster, (*udo tectorio*,) are permanent. Each coat spread before the other is perfectly dry and hard."

The Greeks, when the marble was mixed, used to have ten men to beat it with sticks; it was so compact, that the stucco was often cut out from marble tables.

Pliny describes (36, c. iii.) cisterns in which was kept lime prepared for use, five parts of sand and two of lime; but he adds, that Cato objected to stone lime, but liked the white lime better, as purer and more useful in building. Pliny mentions pit sand, river and sea sand; of pit sand a fourth part, of river a third. The older the lime the better, he adds, and in building there were laws forbidding the use of lime when less than three years old.

Thus, says he, no plastering of theirs was disgraced by cracks.

And no plastering had any splendour unless spread with sand three times, and marble dust twice.

Among Italian writers, Cennini, Vasari, and Armenini, have written technically of fresco. Cennini is the earliest; he was a pupil of Agnolo Gaddi, who was a pupil of Taddeo Gaddi, who was a pupil of Giotto, who was a

pupil of Cimabue, who was a pupil of the Greeks, and he says his precepts were handed through this succession of great masters to himself. Cennini recommends "due parti de sabbione, la terza parte calcina;" and this I have found the simplest and the surest preparation.

Sand, lime, and water, do not indurate so strongly as marble-dust and lime; these become marble in polish and strength.

Fresco seems to have nettled Vasari, who, in his introduction on sculpture, says, "You may say what you please of the judgment required in sculpture, but I affirm fresco requires more; because there are neither time, space, nor patience, to unite these irreconcilable enemies, lime and colour! when the eye cannot see the true colour till the lime is dry; so that he who said it was working in the dark, was not far from the truth."

"Besides, whilst the lime is moist, it must not be left, and all must be done in one day; and he who has not this power is obliged to retouch when the fresco is dry; which in time brings out patchings, stains, retouchings, colours one on another, and brush-marks, after the colour is set; which, adds Vasari, is the vilest thing in the world, because it is evidence of the shallow power of the artist; so that when the fresco is washed, all the retouchings (after it is dry,) disappear in the sponge, and nothing is left but what is genuine fresco."

This comparatively imbecile habit of retouching when dry seems Vasari's abhorrence, and certainly could never have been the practice of Raffaele and Michael Angelo, but of inferior men.

Again, in Antonio Veneziano's life, Vasari praises his fresco, and says, he never retouched, and that is the reason, adds he, that even to this day his colours main-

tain their splendour, proving his great power and sound principle, in not retouching, because all retouchings vanish from genuine fresco, painted on soft mortar, which will not endure any other material on it after it is dry. (Vol. ii. p. 208. Ed. 1568.) His proportions of marble, dust, and lime, vary from those of Vitruvius, Pliny, and Cennini; but the principle is the same.

The great necessity in fresco is the condition of the lime; in fact, its durability depends upon it. This is a difficulty which time only can conquer, but if the acidity of the lime could be removed by chemical process, it would be a happy alliance between art and science.

It is curious, however, that Pliny is the only one who says it should be kept three years. Neither Cennini, or Armenini, or Vasari, say more, than that its heating qualities should be subdued.

Old lime cannot be got in England; in Italy it is always at hand. The lime used by the Germans in their first attempts was eight years old, and Cornelius had lime for his Last Judgment twelve years old.

The moment it is settled that fresco shall be adopted, lime, the best adapted, should be instantly fitted, and buried till used.

From a careful examination of an exquisite head in fresco, painted by Correggio, and now belonging to Mr. Harman, it is clear that in every part of the painting there was a gemmy and solid body of colour, equal to Rembrandt or Reynolds; in fact, if some parts are thin and some thick, the lime ground will shine through the thin parts, and utterly destroy all gradation from light to dark.

A distinguished painter, who was four years in the Vatican, copying daily, assured me that he wetted the

head of Pythagoras, and found it as rich in body and impasto as Sir Joshua. I remark on this, because fresco was called by a clever artist, in the evidence before the committee, perpetual glazing, like water-colour tinting.

The unfortunate weakness of fresco practice is the rarity of being able to paint at once from nature on your wall; and though cartoons, when everything is settled, generate a habit of settled thinking, they generate a habit also of feeble copying, when the spirit of invention is evaporated, and which pupils may execute almost as well as the master.

The imperfection in the realities of fresco, which proceeds from this miserable and tame method, induced Reynolds to lay down a law that reality of effect was incompatible with high thought. Nothing could be more unjust, as the attempt of Michael Angelo to embody his thoughts in oil, by the hand of Sebastian del Piombo, and the attempt of Raffaele, in the Transfiguration, decidedly prove.

This cartoon practice is the reverse of the principle of the Venetians, the Flemings, the English, or the great Spaniards. After a sketch is settled, nature is resorted to; at the moment of execution the deficiencies of the model are supplied by the imagination of the painter, and even though not one feature of the model be copied, in truth, force and colour, it has been the greatest aid.

The Venetians occasionally painted in fresco without cartoons, and so did the other Italians at times; but nothing must be left to chance; and, therefore, those delicious rapid expressions of tone and touch, the very essence of the genius of Rubens, Tintoretto, and Titian, must not be expected; indeed, Cornelius and the Germans, with great ingenuity, finding the utter impossi-

bility of those excellencies of a perfect imitation being accomplished in lime, came to the ingenious conclusion they are not to be attempted ; and they most heroically assert, that Titian, Giorgione, and Rubens, are to be set aside entirely, as incompatible with the high aim of their sect ; just as Raffaele had been before set aside, because he gave evidence of being subjected to classic influences. A very pretty vacuum in art for the new system !

Rubens, and Titian, and Rembrandt, made drawings of hands, and feet, and heads, but they still had the living model to paint from ; they did not copy and colour from feeble chalk cartoons, trusting for truth of imitation to their memories of nature. This is a lamentable exigency in fresco, which it is very difficult to avoid. The absence of shadow, it has been said, gives fresco a more real look of life than any other mode of painting, even than oil with its contrasts.

The Germans, to remedy this, make coloured cartoons, but nothing can supply the immediate reference to life ; and though the higher qualities of beauty, and form, and drapery, and composition, and grace, and expression, form an ample equivalent for the want of shadow, more shadow and power of effect would perhaps not injure those high qualities of excellence, which belong to this national style of decoration, though lightness be its essence.

To conclude the technical part : the wall for fresco is at first the common preparation for all walls ; then comes the second coat, on which pozzolana is used in Italy ; when that is freshly dry, the last is spread over, composed of fine river sand and lime, as much as is wanted ; and when the plasterer, in polishing, feels the board sticking, or difficult to move, then is the time to trace your portion of cartoon, and work away, or dash

at it without a cartoon. It is a mistake to suppose you cannot glaze whilst painting in fresco; when nearly dry you can spread over a tint warm or dark, and touch in, and increase the power before final setting. It may utterly ruin your whole day's practice, but if done with decision it will double its beauty.

With respect to the question, whether the early painters, Giotto, Grottino, Spinello, Masaccio, tinted the lime only, leaving the lime for the lights and body, was not introduced till after after Giorgione's impasto in oil, I reply, that, on hearing and reading this, which appeared to me perfectly incompatible with my experience, I wrote immediately to Florence, and requested an intimate friend* to go instantly to the works of Masaccio and the earlier ones, and tell me, after the most scrupulous examination, whether they had body and touch, or were perpetual glazings, and left the lime for lights; and to write to me time enough for this evening's meeting. He did so, and a few days ago I got his reply, and give you the extract.

"I have been round to visit the churches—I have examined well the old ones—Giotto, Gaddi, Giottino, and Spinello; they painted with less body, because the rough sandy texture of the wall is apparent all through, but their colours were not transparent—their lights are touched on—they are body colours, not at all washy; and perhaps not much thinner in quantity than the more modern works, for there the ground may have been smoother, and that would give more the look of the body to the colour put on.

"Massaccio, for instance, not only has none of the gritty mealy look, but his paint is in sufficient body to

* Seymour Kirkup, Esq.

show the tooth of the brush; he has, too, very deep rich tone, and even more body than Andrea del Sarto, or Pietro da Cortona."

He concludes, by saying, "I repeat, the oldest frescos were painted with body colour, not glazed, or the wall left for the lights, not even in the architecture, or light parts of the back-ground or drapery, but the surface of the rough wall telling more through the paint, and looking a little mealy, more than in the works of Masaccio."

There have been great disputes, whether the Greeks painted in fresco; and Letronne,* who denies they did, except in ornament, appears to me to prove the very thing he wishes to disprove by his quotations.

He says *udo tectorio* applies to plasterers, and not to painters in Vitruvius; but he does not give us what Vitruvius just before says, in the progress of fitting a work for stucco. In the middle of the process he stops and says, "Thus completed, it will be a species of plastering fit for pictures;" *sic emandata tectoriorum in picturis erit species.*†

After this allusion to painting, he says, colours, on *udo tectorio*, are permanent.

As to the Greeks, Letronne is equally positive, though his own quotation from Plutarch, to prove they did not paint in fresco, proves that they infallibly did.

He says, ἐφ' ὑγροῖς ζωρεῖν, (to paint on the wet,) does not mean fresco.

Plutarch, in alluding to the different impressions

* Lettres d'un Antiquaire à un Artiste sur l'Emploi de la Peinture Historique Murale. Paris, October 1835. A most learned and useful work. See page 364, et seq.

† Lib. vii. cap. iii. Vit.

people you love make on your mind, in comparison with those who are indifferent to you, says, "those you care nothing about leave no more impression on your soul, than paintings on the wet, which speedily vanish and escape your observation; whilst those you do love remain on your mind like pictures in encaustic, which live, and breathe, and which time cannot efface.*

Now, says Letronne, it is undoubted fresco is unalterable, and does not vanish.

I grant him, when dry and settled; but it is a fact, that the beauty of Plutarch's remark is felt deeply by those who have practised fresco, and also know that it vanishes at first, as if a spirit was sinking into the wall. Its revival after is no argument against the truth of Plutarch's allusion in its first process. It is fair, therefore, to infer that *ἐφ' ὑγροῖς ζωγραφεῖν*, means to paint on wet mortar, or fresco, and that the Greeks knew this practice as well as tempera and encaustic, and its various modes; and by their mixing oil with wax as a varnish, "*cera punica cum olio liquefacta*," I am convinced oil and wax were used for a vehicle as well as for a varnish.

Armenini is, I think, the best author to consult on the technical practice of fresco; his practical experience seems great; he describes a man who painted in fresco with both hands—Luchetto of Genoa—he painted the church of St. Matthew; he painted with incredible facility and great power, holding a brush in each hand full of colour.

Armenini says, many painters boiled their lime, to reduce its acidity; and the whole chapter is full of excellent practical advice.

* Plut. Amat. p. 759; t. ix. p. 42. 43. Ed. Reiske.

He describes the preparation of fresco, the same exactly as our setting our palette in oil.

First of all, the pots containing the colours, (all earths,) ground in water : then of each colour in its native condition, two mixtures are made, the last the lightest, with the whitest lime, and placed in gradation for use after the original tint.

The flesh colour, red, yellow, and blue, and black, are all treated in the same way ; and a sufficient quantity is always mixed at once for the whole picture, so that no variation in the degree of tint may take place by subsequent preparation.

Indeed, I recommend his Chapters 6 and 7, on cartoons and fresco, as amusing to the connoisseur, and essential to the artist.

Having thus placed before you, first, the necessity of being careful in stucco preparation to receive the colours ; secondly, the mode of fitting the lime to make it ; thirdly, the process of execution from the best authors ;—now comes the question,—Is the English school, as a body, in a condition for the practice of fresco ? and which is to be recommended as a model—the Italian or the German school ? Munich or Rome ?

Primâ facie, the exclusive habits of the British school for many years have not been the very best to form a race of fearless designers and inventors. But the country teems with talent, which only wants right direction, sound instruction, and fair reward.

The majority of artists will naturally wish what they can most easily do ; but the question is not what the artists wish, but what the state wants ; and I hope there is too much manly pride in the profession to allow Europe to say, which it will, that the objection to fresco

proceeds from the anticipating agony of being obliged to draw, and not from any doubt of its superiority. Those who are unqualified, and are ambitious of employment, have plenty of time to draw and dissect. Are the opposers to be indulged, because fresco will make them draw? Surely not. I grant a man may be deep in the chemical affinities of lime and alumina, hydrogen, oxygen, and carbon, and yet be a very bad painter; but her Majesty's commission must be cautious of such pretences; they must not be imposed on by the profundity of mortar. An artist may be able to prove that all our bodies are but chemical compositions. The best reply to such evidences of genius, is, Can you draw the figure? Do you know its construction? What have you done in oil before you are let loose in fresco?

Whether the decoration and design will be worthy the architect who has prepared the opportunity,—whether the epoch coming will be an epoch or not,—will entirely depend on the importance attached to the great opportunity; first, by the commission; next, by the artists; and on the gravity, ardour, and vigour with which both proceed.

If the plan of Munich or Rome be not adopted, nothing will be the result, but a plan without consistency, vain struggles without results, and disjointed and futile efforts, which, however individually excellent, will have no connexion as a whole; and then, indeed, will revive the sneers at the genius of Britain, and justly.

It is our duty to prevent this disgrace; it is our duty to adopt the plan of foreign nations, to prevent the necessity of calling in their personal aid, which must be the case if we do not. Bentham's "greatest happiness" principle to the greatest number, will not do here. You disdain

foreign aid, and yet you seem resolved to act in every way which, in the end, will oblige you to ask it.

The only way to equal or beat them is to adopt their modes of proceeding; and what were they? What was the system of the Germans, as more immediately to the purpose? 1st. They tried their inexperience on a private residence, and succeeded beyond expectation.

Let British artists be thus tested before the Houses are ready. Let the ablest be placed at the head, and direct and claim the help of the others, consulting them as friends, guiding them as pupils, and attending to their suggestions when valuable.

The result of the German attempt in Rome was, that the ablest was selected by the King of Bavaria, and commissioned at a salary for ten years; thus a school was rapidly formed under a leader, the only way of forming one; and though fresco has never been extinct in Italy, it has never, since the Vatican, been so effectually concentrated in one decided national effort for one national effect, as at Munich; and this is the glory which belongs to the school, to the great monarch who sanctioned it, and to the great second-rate artist, Cornelius, who devoted himself to realize the wishes of his sovereign.

How far the system of design pursued by this school be sound or mistaken, is another question.

The leaders conceived the art to have degenerated, and to require an opposition so comprehensive, that it bordered on the ridiculous in its very purity.

They conceived that the classic influence of the discoveries of some of the great single works of the ancients did not bring Italian art to excellence, but led it astray; they therefore resolved to return to that point where it first began, in hopes of perfecting another style, more

appertaining to a christian people, which should be totally independent of classic influence.

In the extravagance of this beautiful and original theory, Raffaelle was proscribed as being liable to classic influence, and therefore he was out of their pale; so that nothing was thought worthy of a christian style, but what had no evidence of Raffaelle's influence left, when by this classic influence he had perfected his own ideas of art.

The principles of classic works, as works of art, could not be objected to, because they could not be refuted; but it must have been, not by the works, but by the paganism of the people who produced them, that the purity of their christian feelings must have been shocked.

The Greeks were Pagans, and therefore whatever may have been the genius displayed in their works, they, the Greeks, not being Christians, their works could not be suffered to have any influence on the principles of German perfection, because they, the Germans, were Christians, and they had resolved to establish a pure christian style.

What is this christian style? Is it anti-christian to restore man to the essential properties of his species as compared with the brute, in form, figure, and head? to show him to us as God first made him, cleared from all the consequences of accident and disease, and dress? Is to do this anti-christian because it is classical? And is to degrade man, and dwindle his form, his neck by cravats, his legs by garters, his shoulders by braces, his feet by shoes, is this a christian style because it is not classical? What absurdity!

The back of the Theseus, and front of the Ilyssus, the head of the Apollo, and majesty of Jupiter, are anti-christian! The principles of our common nature were

rejected in German art, because they were discovered by Pagans!

But why not carry this principle through? What right has a journeyman painter to give a hero the straight nose? that is classical. Why not adopt the system of the monkish painters, who maintained that in proportion as Christ's head was ugly and agonised, in that proportion was it christian.

This wonderful people, in spite of Lessing and a host of excellent critics, have ever had more imagination than reason, and have always given evidence of more power to produce discussion than discover truth,—to take fact for fiction, and fiction for fact. Their mental energy and fervour are worthy examples, but the excess to which they go is to be watched.

To suppose that by going back to the Gothicism of gold grounds, staring eyes, and meagre forms, they must arrive at the perfection of art, was a mental delusion: we might as well agree to write like Chaucer, under a hope of advancing to Milton as a result. Cimabue and Giotto did their best, as well as Raffaele and Michael Angelo; and if each head of an epoch did not always do so, what reason can be given why each should not every century go back to hieroglyphics as the earliest mode of design?

Any principle which excludes Raffaele is insanity, and must be treated as such; for the classic influences which affected him were the sound principles of the greatest artists which the world ever saw, and as applicable to christian art as to any other.

The German system may be characteristic; so is the Chinese, the Peruvian, the Hindoo, the Bosjeman at the Cape. German art has always been characteristic, and

Albert Durer's style infatuated the Italians in their greatest period.

So intense is the instinct for a new sensation in mankind, that it palls on beauty, wearies of truth, and seeks relief often in deformity. Variety is a component principle in our pleasurable sensations, and any art is at times a relief from the continuity of what is no longer new, however divine. No wonder at the success of German art.

Thoughts too refined to be expressed in words, imaginings too impossible to be comprehended by thought, longings which belong not to earth, yearnings that would puzzle in heaven; of all people in the world, the Germans are the least fit to settle the limits of an art, the essence of which consists in palpabilities and positive realities, or it is not understood.

It is said that the German school have opposed classic prejudices, and their works are from natural impressions, and not from classic recollections.

Thus the unalterable principles of the perfection of the human form is a classic prejudice, and the half-starved, every-day figures of the mediæval age a christian perfection; whereas I maintain the purity of the inward Christian can be best conveyed by beauty and perfection in the outward symbol; for there is no necessary connexion between external beauty and internal depravity, any more than there is between internal virtue and external deformity.

The leading doctrine of art is to convey its meanings by beauty in everything, and the best guides to this goal are the works of the Greeks; a selection from nature on their principle is not less a natural impression, because they guide, than taking nature as it is found with all its defects, where they are no guide at all.

A man, say they, must have art in himself: but supposing a great genius in art born blind, how much would come out of him?

A great painter must have an intense susceptibility to form and colour, through his senses to his brain, in himself of course, so as to be propelled to imitate by lines and colours, in his earliest childhood, what he sees, and thus to convey his thoughts and combinations by this imitation to others. His first imitations of life will be without selection or choice; but when he wants to convey great thoughts and grand actions by human forms and human faces, he finds any form and any face will not be in character with his imaginary actors. He then seeks the works of predecessors, and there are works by a people who always did select the beautiful from the ugly, the heroic from the common, the sublime from the petty, the essential from the accidental; he ascertains their principles from perpetual comparisons of their works with living nature; he comes to conclusions by their assistance; he forms anew a principle for his own practice; and this, it seems, is a classic prejudice, a classic influence inconsistent with the purity of a christian mind, and must not be done in German art. No man can be more alive to the great merit of the German school than I am, in their struggle to revive the great principle of monumental decoration. They persevered through scorn, and ridicule, and laughter, which may have driven them to their early excess on a principle of defiance: but they succeeded in going through; and say what we may, and be as irrefutable as we please, their frescos (tapestry in mortar as they may be) are a fourth great epoch in art. If they went back for the sake of going forward, it was the excess of all reformers; so common, so natural,

in the fury of the moment they did not see they could only arrive at the perfection they aimed at, in proportion as they approached the very classic influence they dreaded!

Raffaëlle began from necessity, as they began from choice, with gold grounds and gothic purity; but the moment his beautiful mind was directed by classic influence, how to select in daily life the essential from the superfluous in form, he left those simplicities; as you can perceive even in his first great fresco, the Dispute of the Sacrament, where the part of that very picture which he last finished is higher in aim, execution, and thought, than the part he began on first with his golden glories.

Cornelius told an honourable member,* who, I have no doubt, remarked on the exaggeration of his expressions, "Such exaggeration was necessary to affect the people."

Never was a greater mistake. What exaggeration is there in the Cartoons, the Vatican, or the pediment of Phidias? None. And what works so affect the people?

This will not do for us. Exaggeration of nature not founded on common sense will never do for the British people; and though the continent may insinuate that it proceeds from our not being advanced enough, permit me to say it proceeds from our being too far advanced in truth and simplicity, ever to relish "any o'erstepping the modesty of life." The real grand style is nature elevated, not distorted,—and though I am convinced there exists no desire in the highest quarters to call in any foreigner to do what can be better and more nationally done by the British school (and the very constitution of the commission is an evidence), there is also no reason for supposing Cornelius would have less delicacy than Canova on

* Mr. Wyse, M. P.

such a point ; Canova, to my certain knowledge, shrunk from even giving advice where the character of the country was concerned.

Cornelius is a great man of the second rank, a great composer, and a grand conceiver. In his *Last Judgment*, his Christ is infinitely superior to Michael Angelo's, and though the whole composition is but a varied repetition of Michael Angelo, with all his faults, still Cornelius has many original and magnificent ideas in this work.

The angels accompanying Dante in his motion towards heaven, rising to everlasting happiness by the force of his own virtue and look, while he is surrounded with the struggling damned, is sublime in conception, and worthy of any man in any period, Greek or Italian ; but he too clings to the monsters for fallen angels, like Dante, and Tasso, and Michael Angelo ; forgetting they were not born in hell, but had fallen from heaven. Though evil, the devils were splendid ruins of beauty, vengeance, and form ; not deformed wretches, the devils of the nursery, with tails and fiery eyes and pug faces.

Cornelius, Overbech, and Snorr, are all great artists of the second rank, and the monarch who has given them the opportunity of distinction is worthy of the men ; but the error of the school is the error of the Germans—" they are always cutting off the wrong leg."* They should not have excluded, on a principle, the refinements of classic selection but should have made perfection of classic art their guide to nature.

In returning to the severity of the Gothic schools, it was not necessary to retain their barbarity. What the Goths did from ignorance, the Germans adopt as know-

* Edinburgh Review.

ledge ; and the Germans exclude as Gothic, what Titian and Raffaele, in the perfection of their experience, tried to unite in the Pietro Martyre, and in the Transfiguration. Is this not cutting off the right head, as well as the wrong leg ?

But, eminent as the German school is, its exaggerations are incompatible with the excellencies of the English school. Retsch's *Macbeth*, and *Lear*, are specimens of what sort of Teutonic ferocities we should be honoured with ; and if any German be called to control, direct, or design, it will be an insult to the dignity and honour of Britain.

The mysticism of their metaphysics and poetry they wish to carry into an art, in which nothing is felt that is not evident passion, or palpable form, colour, and identity, as the vehicles of thought.

In our approaching epoch, let us visit Munich only in our journey to Rome.

Italian art and Greek perfection, the Cartoons and the Elgin Marbles, form a school here, which no other country can equal. Do we mean to forego these models of excellence and to pursue a phantom ? Are we to give up what 2,500 years in the one case, and 300 years in the other, have sanctioned and settled ? Rash delusion ! Let us base our efforts on these foundations of common sense and common truth, carry them further if we can ; but to swerve from Greek art as the guide to English nature, is to be wrong, and the sure precursor of inextricable absurdity and decay.

Consider for a moment our apathy to high art since the Reformation ; consider we are excelled in a feeling of the influence of decorative commemoration, by barbarians. Lord Jocelyn found figures of justice painted outside a police-office at Chusan : and Mehemet Ali, after

the battle of Nezib, commissioned Horace Vernet to paint a grand commemoration of his victory, whilst to this hour no national commemoration has taken place in Britain for Waterloo; no vote of the state, no thought of the people, as far as painting is concerned.

The respective durability of oil or fresco I believe to be this: fresco will retain its purity longer than oil, but whether it will decay as a material sooner, I know not, though the following fact is in its favour.

In the refectory at Milan, Lionardo painted his Last Supper in oil;* on another part of the same room, and on the opposite wall, Montorfano had painted a fresco before Lionardo's work.

Lionardo's Last Supper is sadly decayed, whilst the fresco of Montorfano is in good condition. The Vatican frescos have been shamefully treated; just after they were finished, Bourbon soldiers, on sacking Rome, bivouacked in the chambers, and seriously injured by their fires some of the heads; the smoke of thousands of candles have ruined the Last Judgment, but the Farnese Palace is perfect, because it has had its due proportion of light, heat, and air, and not been liable to the accidents of the Vatican.

If the commission heroically adopt fresco, the effect on British art will be tremendous. The provinces I know to be silent volcanos; and all classes will be astonished

* Michael Angelo said oil-painting was fit for children. Did he mean Lionardo's great work was the work of a child? The tameness of the oil-painting in Rome, even by Raffaele, in comparison with the gigantic sweep of a fresco brush, may have justified him in his feeling; but there are parts of ceilings in oil by the great Venetians worthy of fresco, or any style. Would Michael Angelo have called "the Miracle of the Slave" a child's work? or the Pietro Martyre?

at the interest suddenly displayed, if fresco be baffled by timidity or intrigue.

The great fact in fresco is this ; there are no means of indulging in those tricks to conceal ignorance in design, which oil so copiously affords. A style, where a knowledge of the construction of everything represented is essential by compulsion, will and must effect that very renovation, which the condition of the school at this moment renders peculiarly adapted to receive.

The impressions of fresco on the mind of Sir David Wilkie were deep and overwhelming. As soon as he recovered from the agitation of a first visit to the Vatican in 1826, he wrote me from Rome.

In the beginning of his letter, he alludes to the Last Supper of Lionardo, and says, " That once perfect work is now but a shadow, and past all power of retrieval. Its material is said to be fresco or tempera, but oil it was, beyond all doubt."

This is a proof of Wilkie's sagacity, for oil* it is. " Like all other pictures in oil of that date, it is cracked, the small spaces leaving the plaster tinged only with what it had absorbed of the paint.

" Lionardo had an eye for softness and depth, incompatible with fresco." (It is a curious fact, Lionardo's hand trembled so when he began to paint, he never could paint in fresco.)

After other matters, he says, " I am now in Rome, and one of the day-dreams of my youth has been accomplished."

" Our friends had arrived the day before, by Perugia ; slight things make deep impressions ; they told me they

* Goethe. Du Fresne.

had been in the Sistine Chapel ; they avoided all remark till we should go together.

“ The next day we and another went in a body. We passed upstairs, and through the Loggie of Raffaele, then through to the first stanza ; Battle of Constantine ; impression unfavourable ; looked grey and chalky ; proceeded to the second, the Attila ; looked warm, light, and elegant ; but the Bolsena, when we hid the window, told with amazing truth and richness ; by this time the dryness of frescos had worn off ; and this last, with the Heliodorus, began to glow upon us with all the tone and richness of oil.

“ Fresco, however, being limited in its power of depth, the St. Peter in Prison, finely as it is arranged, is black and colourless, and in material, for want of what oil alone can give—a failure.

“ But of all, the School of Athens is the most elegant, though suffering much from change. Parts of it are most highly finished, and the French, who object to the latter pictures, think this the purest of any.

“ The whole looked less than I expected, and in worse condition.

“ By many intricate stairs we came to the Capella Sistina, and on entering, looked to the end, but not seeing the Last Judgment, guessed that I was immediately under it ; on turning, the effect produced by shapes was rich beyond everything, but the hue was grey and slaty, this wearing off as it always does in fresco. I was gratified by a rich and harmonious arrangement of tints, and, what we did not expect, much which reminded us of Sir Joshua, even of his colour and feeling, impressing us with the undoubted sincerity of that great man’s admiration.

"Fresco," he says, "has excited my attention much; it decays sooner than oil,* and is incapable of being repaired and refreshed like oil.

"To the common eye, too, when old, it is not so inviting; but after all, fresco, when new, as I have seen here, is gay and luminous and ornamental, and from the space it allows, capable of combinations that oil can never pretend to.

"Might it not be revived in England? Might not the halls at Windsor, or the House of Lords?—I wonder no Englishman has ever thought of reviving it. I applaud the Germans for the attempt, gothic as it is, and think Snorr the chief of the sect, worthy to be so employed in his own country; sure he would gain honour."

"At Sienna," he says, "the frescos of Pinturicchio are the freshest and most beautiful frescos I ever saw, in perfect state, and give one the clearest idea of fresco, and with the arabesques round them make this one of the most beautiful and ornamental rooms I ever witnessed."

This was written in 1826, sixteen years ago. The frescos at Sienna were before the Vatican, but have always been unmolested, and you hear Wilkie says they are perfect and fresh.

It is curious to reflect, that there have been but three great epochs of commemorative art. The great Hall at Delphi by Polygnotos; the Parthenon; and subsequently the Vatican, comprising the Sistine Chapel; perhaps the Glyptothek might be added as a fourth.

The greatest decorative work of the Greeks was this magnificent Lesche at Delphi; it was executed by order of the Cnidians, who had a treasure at Delphi,

* This is not true.

and had built a stadium on the most elevated part of the town.

Besides this construction, they connected their names with the hall, by employing Polygnotos to paint the walls at their expense, leaving, of course, the choice of subjects to him. One portion of these subjects represented the sacking of Troy by the Greeks, in memory of Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, who was murdered at Delphi—the other, the descent of Ulysses to the shades below.

Polygnotos was the great genius of Greek art, and La Roche, in the Palais des Beaux Arts, at Paris, has lately been guilty of great injustice in placing the courtly portrait-painter Apelles on the throne.

Aristotle says, Polygnotos made men better than they were; Dionysius the same as they are; and Pauson worse than they were. Polygnotos, therefore, had a standard of form, and could, in the human figure, select the essential from the superfluous, and at whatever period of art that is done, art is in a high condition of design. He lived about the nineteenth olympiad; the Parthenon was doing or done, and no man would have been endured or employed by the independent states of Greece who was an ignorant composer.

You all know the glorious Parthenon and its decorations; nothing more appeared on a great principle, though art flourished long, till after its ruin and decay, and then by slow degrees and the establishment of Christianity, came the Vatican and Sistine Chapel.

You will thus see that such epochs for the development of genius are rare, and are never realized unless the genius and the patron exist together; when they do, the Lesche at Delphi, the Parthenon, the Vatican, and Glyptothek, are the result; when they do not, then come

Greenwich Hospitals, Domes of St. Paul's, Versailles Palaces, and Montague Houses.

No patronage can create genius—but genius cannot fully develop itself without patronage; and that is the real moral condition of the question.

Southey said to me, twenty-five years ago, "It takes one man's life to get a principle acknowledged, and another to get it acted on." We have lived to see the principle acknowledged, viz., state support: may we all live to see it acted on! But it must not be concealed, we have strong prejudices to get over which no other country ever had in an equal degree.

First, we have a German party, who are so delighted at Munich, they forget Rome.

Next we have an oil party, who hate fresco, Raffaele, and drawing.

Third, we have an encaustic party, who forget Sir Joshua was an encaustic painter, and that when he sent Northcote with a lady's portrait to dry by the fire, he found her head slipped below her shoulder on his return.

Fourth, we have a cheap party, who like to contract for the effusions of genius; who would rather pay £10,000 for a work which would be sure to decay, at £1,000 a-year, than £5,000 at once, to secure an enduring one.

Fifthly, we have what the Duke calls, in his despatches, the croakers, who have no belief in their own talents, or the talents of any others; and we have the procrastinators, who say, had we not better wait till there is a rail-road in the Bolan pass, till the corn-law league be abolished, till the revenue be in surplus, and till there be no longer a single complaint from people, chartists, radicals, abolitionists, electors, dissenters, agriculturists,

manufacturers, constituencies, or corporations? When this millennium of happiness comes to pass, then will be the time for historical painting.

Again, we have the Gothic party, who, because the building is Gothic, insist that the frescos should be Gothic too, and should have no symptom of the advance or perfection of art,—in fact, should have no classic influence.

And lastly we have the great Utilitarian party, who, if they had created the world, I fear, and I say it without disrespect, would have left out beauty in women—flowers on earth—and colour in heaven!

Six-and-thirty years ago Mr. Perceval was asked to devote £5000 a-year, for the advance of historical painting. “During the war!” said he; “No, no; wait till the peace!” The peace came: Lord Liverpool was applied to—and he said, “Wait till we are a little recovered.” Canning was entreated to use his influence with Lord Liverpool, and he said—“It did not belong to the Foreign Office.” A million of money was voted for churches. The Bishop of London gave leave for one altar-piece in every church in his diocese. Lord Farnborough was requested to entreat Mr. Vansittart to propose to the House to set aside one per cent. for the support of high art at such a glorious opportunity. And he replied, “Wait till the churches are finished.” At last came Mr. Canning’s successor,* as First Lord; his taste was known—application was made, an hour fixed for discussion in Downing Street. The aspirant came as the Horse Guards was striking. Hour after hour passed away. Deputations from the silk-mercers of Coventry, cotton-merchants from Manchester, timber-merchants from

* Lord Goderich.

Liverpool, all came after him, and passed on before him. He took up a folio to write a note, when in large letters inside were written, by some unhappy wight like himself, "Waiting room—heaven knows, true enough." Then came one,* whose straight-forward energy of mind entered into the question at once; but before anything could be thought of, he resigned on a point of honour. The next noble lord† approved of the plan of adorning the old House, but feared the House would not support a vote of money for art, whereas in nothing would they be more unanimous; and the last noble lord‡ admitted the beauty, the feasibility of the plan, but he had heard it was not wanted; yet he granted a committee. Lords Brougham, Durham, Colborne, Dover, and Morpeth, had all presented my petitions in favour of high art in vain; and now, when we have a minister on whom the glory will fall,§ we hear it said, "Call in the Germans!"

To the late government the country is indebted for the school of design, and to the present, for carrying out the intentions of the last government to their full extent; and further, as correct design is advancing, and cannot be stopped, if fresco be adopted, there is no calculating the rapid improvement.

Poor high art! Scouted so harshly by the reformed church, neglected by the authorities, longed for by the people. Everybody says, what do the English know of fresco?|| Was there not the same outcry against the

* The Duke.

† Lord Grey.

‡ Lord Melbourne.

§ Sir Robert Peel.

|| No English artist able to paint in fresco! At this very instant there exists, in a collection not far from Carlton Gardens, a fresco painted by an English artist at Rome, in the year 1810, which he threw aside! It was got hold of by a dealer, sold as an ancient fresco, exhibited as such at the British Gallery in Pall Mall, and since commented upon, and lauded, as a beautiful specimen of ancient art. So much for a British artist not knowing how to paint in fresco!

army when they went to Portugal? What did *they* know of military service? Alas! alas! Does not the vice of Britain lurk in all our corners? a democratic hatred of all superiority, rank, wealth, or genius.

But fresco decays, and is not durable! Who can help smiling at the eagerness of the combatants for human durability, when one thinks that the first era of the world, with all its passions and schemes for durability, was drowned in a deluge,—that Babylon is a shapeless mound in solitude and silence,—that the Pyramids and temples of Egypt are mountainous fragments,—that Palmyra is a desert, the Parthenon a ruin, and ancient Rome a mass of tottering bricks? What patent have we in creation, to hesitate at developing the genius of the nation, because durability is not human, or because one mode of development may last a century or two longer than another, with these mighty examples before our eyes, that all must go? *Debemur morti nos, nostraque.*

Durability is a question of degree. The object now is to give the country a power of wiping off a stigma by its own talents; and will you call in foreigners to do that? will you give them the power of saying, “You could not do this without us, and, therefore, your suspected incapacity is apparent?”

At least keep this ground sacred and holy, which has been already immortalized by the hero of Cressy, the father of the hero of Poitiers, with all its historical recollections, which imagination will call up at the very mention of its name; at least let this portion of London be unbruised by foreign hoof. No man, surely, who has a drop of English blood in his veins, or British bottom in his nature, ever can, or ever will, patiently endure the decoration by any other than British hands of a spot

hallowed by the tread of the Black Prince, or his illustrious father.

The genius of the Country is not to be feared, whatever may be the moral courage of those who wield it.

An eminent witness said before the committee—and said justly—it was mortifying to find confidence placed in British artists, in every part of Europe, and diffidence existing as to the extent of their capacity only where they were born and bred.

For fifty years past, has it not been the predominating tendency of all classes, to maintain that high art would never succeed in Britain?

Has not every youth been kindly advised not to devote himself to a pursuit in which there was little chance of reward? Has he not rather been pitied than encouraged, if he wished to spread a taste, to contest the palm with Italy and France? Surely this is simply true, and so true it cannot be refuted. And now, when at last a great public opportunity is “casting its shadow before,” is it just to question the genius existing, and to whisper the necessity of foreign aid? Are the artists to be punished for the omissions of their patrons?

It may be and is answered, artists are of no country; but Chatham, and Pitt, and Nelson, and the Duke, never carried their genial sympathy, in their philosophical estimation of other nations, so far as not altogether always to prefer their own.

This may not be very enlightened, but it is the basis of the greatness of all nations.

An English exhibition is a mass of genius, frittered, distilled, and filtered into petty trifles for sale, and is not a criterion of its power; the British artists do not do what they can do, what they wish to do, nor what they

ought to do, but what they are obliged to do; they send their goods to market, and suit them to the demand; give them a higher market, and a nobler demand, they will meet your wishes, and rise superior to all competition.

When the mode of execution shall have been determined on by the Royal Commission, then should a plan of invention be decidedly arranged.

Our leading passion as a nation, are "politics and commerce," our government a constitutional monarchy; and the object in decorating the Legislative Houses with a series of grand frescos should be to illustrate, by designs of suitable objects, "The best government to regulate without cramping the liberty of man."

There will be a corridor, a St. Stephen's Hall, another hall, a Robing-room for the Queen, and a Speaker's House.

Let every space in each hall, by choice of subject from our own history and the history of the world, illustrate this object.

First, in the Great Corridor.

Illustrate the Horrors of Anarchy and Democracy.

Second, St. Stephen's Hall.

The Evils of Despotism and Revolution.

Third, the Great Hall.

The Blessings of Law and Justice.

Fourth, the Robing-Room.

The Liberty of a Limited Monarchy.

Fifth, the Speaker's House.

By smaller works, complete the illustration of the principle.

Between each design, let there be statues of all the

great men, from Alfred, who have contributed to complete the fabric of monarchy, and let every design, historical or allegorical, in every part of the building, have reference to the leading object of the illustration.

The subjects need not be confined to our own country exclusively. The school of Athens had nothing to do with Italy; it suited collaterally the object of Raffaele: had he been confined to Italian subjects alone, what would have become of St. Peter's release from prison, the Heliodorus, or the School of Athens?

If confined to our own history, variety will be injured as well as beauty, and we shall have a gothic armoury and a collection of costumes in native art.

Thus far as to the nature of the subject suited to her Majesty's Palace at Westminster; now as to the principle in selecting the genius required.

After the plan is settled, each hall shall be placed under the direction of an eminent artist, and he should be left to choose his own assistants.

Each directing artist should be part of a council, the architect to be president; all matters relating to the decoration should be finally settled by this council, subject to the consideration of the commission.

When once the plan of decoration be settled, the cartoons should be begun; for *now* is not too soon, and when once begun, the work and preparations should continue regularly, the expense provided in the annual estimate like any other government expenditure; the whole work taking so much time, and no more, as is necessary to its perfect execution.

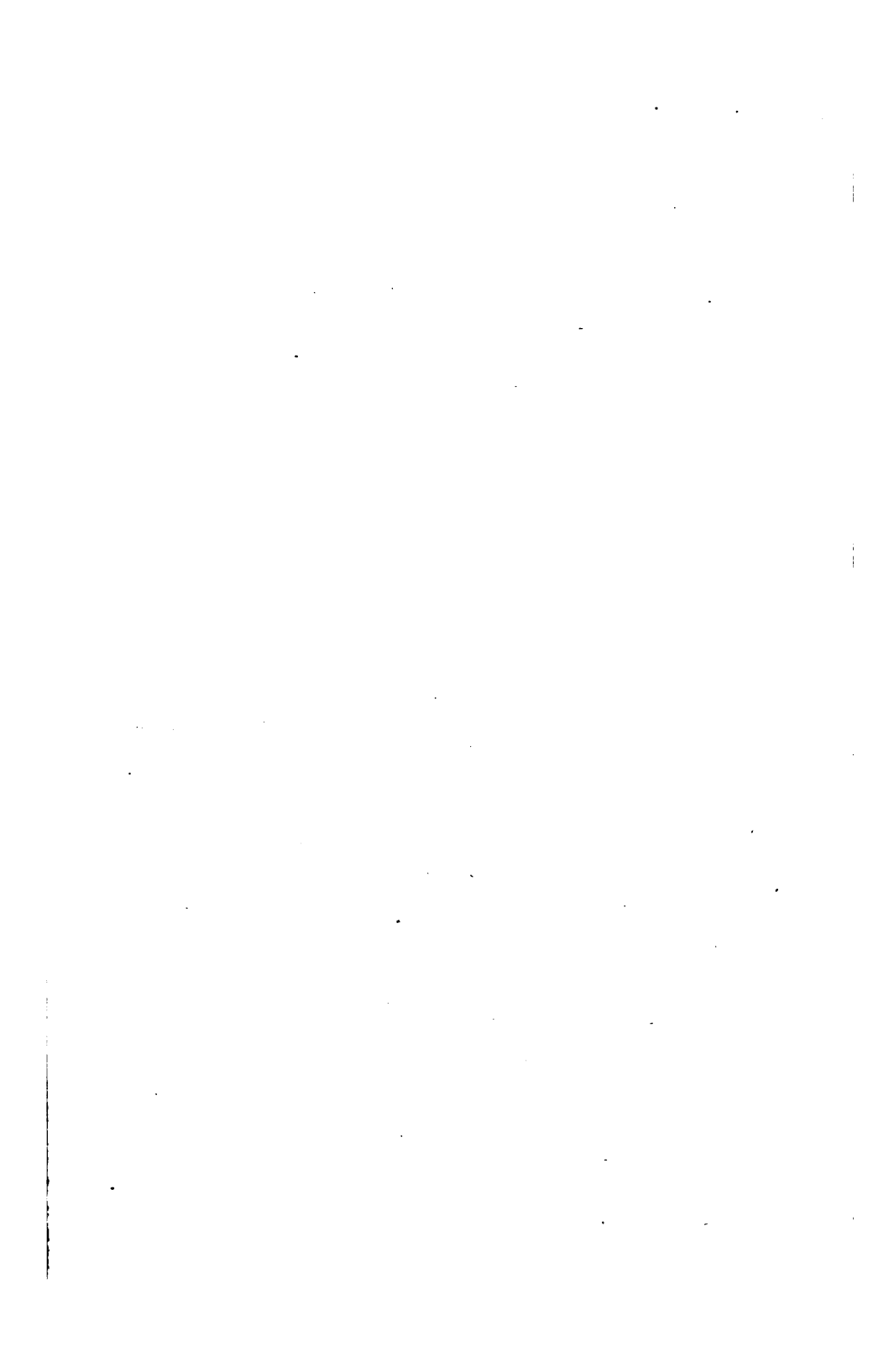
By the time one hall is done, a school would be formed, and the high art of England take its proper level.

It is said competition will be better than selection,

because there may be a great genius unknown. There may be ; but I humbly suggest that a great youthful genius, at present unknown, is much more likely to be properly trained by eminent artists than by sanguine enthusiasts.

Under the guidance of Polygnotos, Phidias, Raffaele, and Michael Angelo, Alcamenes, Julio Romano, Perino del Vaga, Polidoro, and Giovanni d'Udine, by the discipline of their masters, became the pride of their country ; and if selection take place on the same principles on this occasion, I predict the same results. But if competition be preferred, boys—more than boys of sixteen and less than men of thirty—will be the annual novelty of the season ; disgust will follow, and in three years the plan will be given up.

To conclude : if the same rational confidence be placed in British painters, as the Duke placed in British soldiers, the reign of our beloved Queen Victoria will be as splendid an era in art, as was that of her great predecessor Elizabeth in literature and in politics.



LECTURE XIII.

ON THE

ELGIN MARBLES.



LECTURE XIII.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is now two-and-thirty years ago,* after a long poetical and delightful two hours of musing in the midst of the Elgin marbles, when they occupied a pent-house in the court-yard of Lord Elgin's house, Piccadilly, (now belonging to the Duchess of Gloucester,) and while in the very act of chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy, that Lord Elgin came in. Naturally enough, I was extremely curious as to where he got *this* fragment, and how he got *that*; and when Lord Elgin was delighting me by every detail, in came Nollekens. His Lordship, finding himself thus tormented by two merciless artists, who never gave him a moment's respite from questions, thought the best way to put a stop to eternal demands on his memory was to give us the whole history of his pursuits in Greece, which he immediately did: and a history more interesting, unsophisticated, or manly, never did I listen to or record.

He told us, at the time he received his appointment of ambassador to the Porte, Harrison of Chester was with

* 1808.

him,—he who had built the Court House at Chester on the model of the beautiful Propylæum of the Acropolis, and that he, Lord Elgin, immediately consulted Harrison how it was possible he could render his visit to Constantinople available to the improvement of architecture and sculpture, with reference to what remained at Athens.

Harrison, who was a man of the purest taste and greatest simplicity of mind, told Lord Elgin that he could greatly serve architectural knowledge if he could get leave to procure casts from the Ionic columns at the end or angle of the pediments, in order to show us how the Greeks turned the volute round at that point. Harrison confirmed this to me after, at Chester, 1821; and he also added, the greatest good would accrue to the science by such casts, or by casts from any other order, or any other part of pure Greek building, which he might meet or admire; for, notwithstanding the beauty of Stewart's engravings, still there was something in a *real* projection of architecture, which, under the varieties of light and shadow, far exceeded in utility any drawing which could be produced by the greatest draughtsman.

Harrison added: sculpture, too, would be greatly benefitted and advanced by casts from any fine work remaining. Lord Elgin, thus advised by a man of so pure a mind and eminent a genius as Harrison, came up to London, and laid a plan (before embarking for Turkey) before Dundas, Lord Grenville, and Mr. Pitt; but all these replied, that with all their love for the arts ("an ounce of Civet, good apothecary!") they could not feel justified in advancing the public money for such objects! But had Mr. Pitt, or Lord Grenville, heard lectures at Oxford, they would have felt they might have advanced

public money, and very often did; for objects infinitely less worthy than improving the public taste.

Lord Elgin, thus baffled where he expected support, resolved, like a man of great energy, which he was, to take the whole responsibility on himself, Harrison having convinced him of the eminent advantage of the principle; and at once, without delay, he proceeded to engage in London the first artists to take views in Greece, the best moulders to take moulds, and the best man who could be obtained to design the sculpture which it might not be possible to take moulds of.

The artists of eminence, as might be expected in London, could not give up their time but under such terms of payment as were totally beyond the means of any private nobleman; Lord Elgin therefore relinquished the idea of employing Englishmen, but took immediate steps to secure the assistance of foreigners who might be more within his reach.

At Palermo, Sir William Hamilton was consulted, and he recommended an artist called Lusieri, who took fire at once; Mr. Hamilton, Lord Elgin's secretary, and Lusieri, went to Rome, to engage formatori (moulders), and at a reasonable rate they also procured two architectural drawers, a Signor Balestro and Ittar, with Theodore, a Calmuc, to make correct designs of the figures.

After a great deal of trouble, Lord Elgin succeeded in establishing these six people at Athens, about August, 1800; and they soon began to mould, to draw, to cast, and to measure everything valuable in art, whether in sculpture, architecture, or inscription.

They soon found, like other Englishmen, very great obstructions; they never could get into the Acropolis but

under a charge of five guineas a day* to the governor; the French occupied Egypt, the hatred of Christians was intense; but when we conquered Egypt, and delivered it over to the Turks, so delighted were the people and the government at this unexpected generosity, that all difficulty vanished before Lord Elgin's desire: the English were admitted unreservedly, and greater facility of access was immediately granted to his artists.

From rough sketches by Ittar were now made measured elevations of every building, with plans and sections, not only in Athens but all over Greece, whilst Signor Lusieri drew most accurately, in colours, the most picturesque and classical scenery in Greece, Archipelago, and the Islands; Theodore designed the figures; Balestro moulded the metopes and grand figures of the pediments; and Lord Elgin and his artists proceeded to carry out the original plan given him by Harrison before he left England, with the greatest success; the power to do so being greatly extended by the good humour of the authorities, in consequence of the political relations of England and the Porte.

Nothing was therefore left undone which could increase our knowledge of the art, science, refinement, and literature of the finest periods of Greece.

Lord Elgin told us that up to this moment he had entertained no other views than those with which he left England, viz. to mould, to draw, and to measure; but when the artists engaged had informed him of the infa-

* They were employed there about nine months, from August 1800 to May 1801, without having any sort of facility or accommodation afforded them even for the purpose of taking drawings, except by the payment of a large fee.—Report, page 4.

mous and daily devastation of the Turks, under their own eyes, and that several of the works of sculpture had been injured during their stay ; that the Turks often fired their muskets at the figures from the plain ; polished the heads of the beautiful metopes into round shot, and pounded fallen figures into lime to build their houses with,—that every English traveller who came into the Acropolis during their stay broke off a bit of an arm or a leg, or a nose, to bring home as a relic ;—and that this is true I can assert, for the late Mr. Thomas Hope shewed me the arm of a Lapetha, which he told me he had broken off as a specimen of the school of Phidias, and which I wondered at being so like nature, and which arm was on a cushion in Duchess Street ;—when Lord Elgin was also assured that a whole Temple, existing in Stewart's time, standing near the Ilyssus, had so totally disappeared since Stewart's time, that not even the foundation was visible ;—when Lord Elgin had thus evidence of the devastation which had gone on, and which was going on then, what more natural than that he should conclude scarcely a fragment would remain of either architecture, sculpture, or inscription, in fifty years more ? No future ambassador would ever, perhaps, from a happy combination of circumstances, have such influence again : he felt the difficulty of his position : if he boldly removed the marbles at once, he foresaw the inferences which the weak, the envious, and the malignant, would make in his own country ; he knew his political opponents would accuse him of furthering his private objects by taking advantage of his public power ; he felt he would incur the hatred of all future travellers, who would be deprived, by the removal of the sculpture, of those poetical lamentations on Turkish barbarity, and Greek oppression, a shot from the Turks

had heretofore so regularly roused; he anticipated the rage of all other travellers who had been and were gone, because he, Lord Elgin, had been able to do what they would have given thousands to accomplish; he was not ignorant of the jealousy of collectors, which would be irritated at the superiority of this collection to all others; he did not forget the probable anger of Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, in spite of their known love for the arts; he expected the affected lamentation of France, of its Institute, and its Academies, because they, the French, had tried to do the same thing, and had been stopped by the Revolution! In fact, he was tormented, as all men are tormented, who contemplate doing a service to their fellow creatures, and which, instead of exciting their gratitude, generally stir up their hatred; for such men are always regarded as possessing more vanity than virtue, inferring the very desire to confer an obligation can only exist in a mind swelling with pride or self conceit, in for a moment supposing it possesses a power not generally possessed, or that it confers benefits for any other reason but to give evidence of its own superiority or talent: Lord Elgin was suspended between the natural desire to save from ruin works which he knew were unequalled in beauty, his natural desire to enrich his country, whose representative he was, and his rational dread of the motives which might also be naturally imputed to him.

With the energy of a daring mind, he resolved that the bold step was the only rational one, let what motives be imputed to him that might; he regained his self possession, and he defied them all.*

* Chairman.—You state that you have rescued the remains from danger?

Lord Elgin.—From the period of Stewart's visit to Athens, till

Who will not applaud his resolution? Who will dare censure his will? No one at *this* hour: but who applauded him then? It is not who applauded him, but who did not censure him in high life?

Backed by Byron, a hue and cry was raised; he was lampooned, abused, ridiculed, epigrammatized, and every motive on earth imputed to him but the motive by which alone he was impelled.

Having once made up his mind, he was a man not easily moved or daunted; he applied at once to the Porte for leave to model and remove, and for a special licence to dig and excavate. Leave was at once granted, and Dr. Hunt* has given us the substance of the firman, which said:—"That in order to show their particular respect to the Ambassador of Great Britain, the august ally of the Porte, with whom they were now and had long been in the strictest alliance, they gave to his Excellency, and to his secretary, and the artists employed by him, the most extensive permission to view, to draw, and to model the ancient temples of the idols, and the sculptures upon them;

the time I went to Turkey, a very great destruction had taken place. There was an old temple on the Ilyssus had entirely disappeared. There was in the neighbourhood of Elis and Olympia another temple, which had disappeared. At Corinth, Stewart gives thirteen columns, I think, and there were only five when I got there; every traveller coming added to the general defacement in his reach; there are now pieces broken off within our day. And the Turks have been continually defacing the heads, and in some instances they have actually acknowledged to me that they have pounded down statues to convert them into mortar. It was on these suggestions, and with these feelings, that I proceeded to remove as much of the sculpture as I conveniently could; it was no part of my original plan to bring away any thing but my models.—Report, page 10, 1816.—Lord Elgin's Evidence.

For other Evidence, see Appendix.

* See Report 1816. Rev. Dr. Hunt's Evidence, page 56.

and to make excavations, and to take away any stones that might appear interesting to them."—(See Appendix.)

Then Lord Elgin erected scaffoldings, and removed what was existing in daily prospect of destruction. The Turkish government never showed any displeasure at any removals during the whole time; the people were pleased, because Lord Elgin employed 300 workmen daily,* and before he got this firman, five guineas a day, as you have heard, were paid to the governor of the Acropolis, merely for admission to draw and measure.

This leave was no particular favour to Lord Elgin, because, had any other traveller applied with equal means, equal access would have been granted; it was not a new thing to attempt, because Konigsmark, in 1687, had tried to remove the great horses and Minerva; but the ropes broke, and they tumbled down and were dashed to powder; and Monsieur Choiseul Gouffier, the French ambassador, before Lord Elgin had applied for the same leave, did obtain it, actually removed a metope, which he left on the ground when the Revolution broke out, and which was brought away for him, and which metope I saw in Choiseul Gouffier's house in Paris, at the Champs Elisées. So much for the common sense in the objections the French presumed to make, and every other nation.

First, English travellers daily mutilated the figures, as I have proved to you in the case of Mr. Thomas Hope; secondly, the Turks made lime of the bodies, shot at the heads, and fired daily at everything; thirdly, a whole temple had disappeared since the time of Stewart; fourthly, Konigsmark tried to remove the horses, and broke what he tried to get; fifthly, Choiseul Gouffier got

* See Hamilton's evidence, page 26.

leave to remove and did remove a metope, and yet Lord Elgin was called a Goth, because he applied as they applied; only Lord Elgin did not let statues break and tumble for want of tackling; he did not fail for want of energy; no, my friends, he was guilty of accomplishing what thousands had been dying to accomplish for centuries before; he was the abominable and unpardonable culprit who succeeded where others had failed; in fact, Lord Elgin committed the atrocious crime of effectually doing what he had undertaken to do: and nothing is so unpardonable in an existing generation, as to succeed!

People could have borne to sympathise with poor dear Lord Elgin, who had spent £51,200, and lost his marbles! there would have been something so inexpressibly delightful in the human heart to have been able to pity him; but to be obliged to look at the marbles in Park Lane, the actual marbles, to touch them, to be assured they were not wood, to feel assured no sophistry could remove the fact that these very sculptures were 2500 years old; that they were the very statues Plutarch spoke of, Pericles ordered, and Phidias executed; that they had crossed the sea, been wrecked, and were all got up again; there was something so inexpressibly insolent in those proceedings, that travellers who had no means to do it before, ambassadors whom Lord Elgin had succeeded, Kings who were eager for a similar museum, and nations who were equally alive to their merits as well as Kings, all opened in an uproar of indignation against that wicked man, who tore from tender Turkish hearts, and unmuti-lating Turkish hands, those Phidian works, of matchless beauty, which all the world knew they always relished with *exquisite* taste, drew from with *inspired* refinement,

and never mutilated except by an innocent shot or two, from that religious veneration for Greek genius, and Greek beauty, they are so well known to possess.

Oh, ladies! is there an eye dry, or a heart which flutters not with sensibility, at the conception of the intellectual torture which must have afflicted those delicate-minded people, the Turks, when they saw the fragments of the mighty genius of Phidias, so long the objects of their daily delight for centuries, torn from their ardent embraces, and placed where they could no longer exhibit that intense enthusiasm for their beauty and perfection by knocking off their noses, or pounding their heads into cannon shot?

Dr. Clarke, too, must join in this cant, as well as Byron. Dr. Clarke says, "The Turks destroy nothing;" and yet, forgetting what he had previously written, when speaking in a subsequent allusion of a temple of Juno at Corinth, observes, there are now only four of the eleven columns seen by Spor and Wheeler, and adds, with the greatest simplicity, "this destruction had been accomplished by the governor, who used them for building his house, *first blasting them with gunpowder.*"*

Innocent dears! These are the Turks, who destroy nothing.

Lord Elgin told Nollekens and myself that he bought the houses under the eastern pediment, and dug to the rock, and not finding the fragments which had fallen down, and must have fallen down, the man seeing his wonder, said, "Oh, if I had known your object, I could have spared you this trouble and expense, for I pounded the

* Page 735. First Quarto Edition of Travels in Greece.

statues into lime to build my house with, and excellent lime they made.*"

Well, after all these anxieties, said Lord Elgin, as he walked about and became greatly animated,—saying *this* I picked up at Eleuses, and *that* at Mycenæ,—after all this, and the fragments were safely on the ground, they had yet to be moved to the Piræus, the ancient port of Athens, now called Porto Leone: five miles!

However, they were safely got down and successfully embarked, and the anchor was hoisted, and the sails unfurled, and the wind blew, and the vessel tacked with its glorious freight, and scudded away before the breeze, my friend anticipating the shores of Britain!

The winds blew, and the sun shone, and Hamilton, I have no doubt, felt a little pride, after so much labour, to find the marbles in a fair gale for England; when, as if to punish a man, as usual, for exulting too soon, the Greek pilot ran the ship on a rock, and down went the marbles in several fathoms water, apparently without the slightest prospect of extrication!

Here was a misery! After all, the world would be able to pity; but, however, Mr. Hamilton did not despair, but remembering some of the Islanders on the coast of Asia Minor were in times of ancient Greece celebrated for diving, he found out their descendants, who were divers still; he hired a set of them, who, after immense perseverance, actually got up every individual case, and not a single fragment was missing;† nor did they meet with

* I excavated down to the rock, and that without finding anything, when the Turk to whom the house belonged came to me, and laughingly told me, that the Statues were made into the mortar with which he built his house.—Page 21, Report.—Lord Elgin's Evidence.

† Every youth in these islands is obliged to bring up a certain

any further adventure till they were landed at Richmond Gardens, where now the Terrace stands ; and soon was the world of art in an uproar.

Such is the romantic modern history of these divine fragments.

His Lordship, says Dr. Hunt in his evidence,* was indefatigable in his researches, not only at Athens, and its neighbourhood, but throughout Asia Minor, the Morea, and Proper Greece, in endeavouring to obtain whatever might tend to the improvement of the arts, particularly in sculpture, architecture, and medals, as well as ancient inscriptions, tending to elucidate the progress of the Greek language, from the *βεττοροφηδον* mode of writing, throughout all the changes to the latest periods of Greece : he also procured specimens of the different orders of architecture, such as capitals and vases, from the earliest to the latest styles, and at this moment stood before us Lord Elgin himself, explaining to us the principles which guided him, the fragments he had moved, and the objects he had in view.

We remained with him to a late hour of the day, and on my arrival home, 1808, I wrote down the conversation as a matter of public interest to the art : it was before the question was before the House, and when no one could be certain of what would become of them.

Lord Aberdeen said in his evidence, page 123,† that the difficulties of removing the marbles must have been great, as in his time there was only one cart in Athens, and that was not fit for such heavy loads, and he added,

number of sponges from the rocks in deep water, before he is entitled to marry the girl of his love.

* See Report.

† Ditto.

that the works were in the greatest danger, from the multitude of travellers who collected fragments.

The marbles were first placed in Privy Gardens, and they had no sooner arrived, after so many adventures, than the connoisseurs and collectors were in arms.

Lord Elgin, who knew little of the political state of art, was not prepared for any opposition, but, innocent noble ! believed the marbles had only got to be seen to be appreciated with the same sincerity with which he first resolved to mould, and then to move them. But we, in London, who knew the ground, shook our heads at his simplicity ; we knew we had a Royal Academy, who never risked injury to its preponderance for the sake of art, and we knew we had societies of Dilettanti, who frowned at any man who presumed to form a collection unless under their sanction ; or unless he was one of their own immediate circle, so that more or less they could share the repute which might accrue to himself.

This being the state of things, a very eminent scholar, who was himself forming a collection of bronzes, (Payne Knight,) and which he meant to leave to the nation, became jealous at this sudden irruption into what he considered his exclusive realms, and having, like most eminent scholars, a great admiration of what was ancient, believed nobody but himself knew anything of art or nature.

This leader of our salons, to whose dictum every one bowed, and against whose ipse dixits no one dared dispute, be he whom or what he might, in rank, station, or talents, took the field against the originality, the beauty, the nature, and skill of the Elgin marbles, and began, at the first dinner party he met Lord Elgin, after Lord Elgin's return from dinner, 1806, to denounce them in a

fierceness and severity of manner quite unbecoming the philosophy of deduction, which ought to be the model-manner of all connoisseurs in art, or leaders of salons. Lord Elgin told me he called out loudly across the table, at a dinner party of the late Duke of Sutherland's, with the most overbearing air, where at least twenty noblemen and men of influence were seated, " You have lost your labour, my Lord Elgin ; your marbles are overrated—they are not Greek, they are Roman, of the time of Hadrian, when he restored the Parthenon, and even if Greek, they are by Ictinus and Callicrates, and not by Phidias, who never worked in marble* at all ; they are perhaps executed by their workmen, hardly higher than journeymen, and throw no light on the details and construction of the body."

Lord Elgin was not sufficiently versed in antiquity or art to venture an argument with this distinguished scholar, and therefore bowed, feeling remarkably comfortable, I dare say, after having spent £51,200 to procure them.

Such is the iron rule of connoisseurship in high life, with noblemen who are never instructed in the principles of art at College, that down went the marbles from that hour in fashionable society ; the government cooled, and the artists were frightened.

In the first place, these dogmatic assertions were wholly without foundation, for the marbles were in no need of repair in Hadrian's time, and there is no evidence they were ever touched : and though Plutarch says Ictinus and Callicrates were the architects, and built the Parthenon, and at that point does not mention the name of Phidias,

* Pausanias mentions a celestial Venus of Parian marble undoubtedly of his hand.—Report, page 1, 1816.

this was very shallow ground for assuming that Phidias did not design and touch the sculptures, or that Ictinus and his partner did.

Plutarch is talking of the erection of the Parthenon, not of its decoration; and though sculptors, architects, and painters, each studied, and each knew the principles of their respective arts, and alternately practised either, yet a painter, a sculptor, and an architect, were not less distinct than now, and not less obtained exclusive reputation in each art.

Phidias was a sculptor, though he could paint and build; Michael Angelo was a painter, though he could cut a statue and build St. Peter's; and Phidias was Director-General of all public works in Athens; and where would he be so likely to put his own hand as on the decoration of the principal temple built by his patron, Pericles, when he (Phidias) was superintendent, and did make the great statue of Minerva inside, and design the whole?

The assertion, that he (Phidias) never worked in marble, will not bear reflection; Visconti at once demolished this dogma by quoting the *Σοφός Λιθουργός* of Aristotle, who gives this title to Phidias, which means *marble-wise Phidias*, or celebrated by his wisdom in cutting marble. Would Aristotle have given such an appellation to a sculptor if he had not obtained a high reputation in cutting marble into flesh, the very striking characteristic of the marbles? Quintilian says, he made gods better than men*; but Valerius Maximus says he wanted to execute the statue of Minerva inside in marble, but the Athenians refused. How could he have wished to execute

* Lib. xii.

this statue in marble if he had never worked in marble? There is no evidence that Sylla, when he sacked Athens, injured the Parthenon; and there is no evidence that Hadrian, when he embellished Athens on the eastern side of the Acropolis, ever touched the Parthenon.

Phidias is called by Aristotle, marble-wise Phidias. Pliny mentions a statue of Phidias in marble. The marbles themselves are evidences of the greatest genius the world ever saw, as they possess more of the principles of vitality than any other sculptures on earth; and all the details of life are so truly given, they have reformed, and will reform, the art of Europe. And yet, because an eminent scholar, blinded by learning, and jealous of the possession, denied their palpable superiority, no one in fashionable life, from that hour, believed they were worth the trouble of moving.

It was the fashion to sneer if any one said they were Greek; it was the fashion to bow gracefully, and turn aside, if you attempted to prove it; the ministry drew in, the nobility were silent; and Lord Elgin, in disgust and despair, removed them from Privy Gardens to his own home, Park Lane, and built a shed over them, without hope or expectation.

Then he was advised, and gloriously advised, to disregard the despotism of scholarship—to throw them open, first to artists, and then to the public, and abide by their decision. To the honour of the artists, and especially the portrait painters, their beauty was proclaimed; then in rushed the public, and their brazen voice thundered approbation and delight; and I declare it is my honest conviction, that the feeling the public displayed for the irrefutable nature of these statues was the first honest move of public feeling towards art, since the Reformation,

which has never ceased, till it has arrived, at this moment, to a most extraordinary condition of passion and excitement.

Amongst those admitted at that time was a young student in London, who had left his father's house at eighteen, "inflamed with thoughts of highest design," who, by incessant industry and patient dissection, had thoroughly qualified his understanding to see at once the superiority of these inspirations of vitality and action, and nature, and who enlisted himself at once on their side with a fury, argument, and enthusiasm that bore down all opposition.

Lord Elgin, interested at his honest zeal, readily listened to Lord Mulgrave's desire that this student should be admitted to draw works which his previous studies had so fitted him to imitate; he was instantly admitted (1808) without reserve; and was the first artist here to investigate the science of their imitation of life, and the first to transfer what he had thus acquired to canvas*.

Having dissected man and animal for two years, having taken a course of his own, founded on his early

* At the time Lord Elgin gave this young man leave to draw the marbles (1808) no artist had been permitted to do so since their arrival. After he had been studying day and night for eight months, the venerable President, West, came in, and, expressing some surprise to see a student there, brought his own canvases next day, and began to sketch. When Lord Elgin published his pursuits in Greece, two letters appeared in it from the venerable President, in which he said he was the first artist that ever drew them, and the first to transfer their principles to canvas, though he knew the student was there eight months before him, and brought out a picture (Dentatus, 1809) in which the principles were developed and acknowledged, two years before the venerable President made his appearance, with the work where he asserted they were to be found.—1811.

conviction that the process of early Greek and Italian study was the same, with a mind thus comprehending the construction of the frame, it was nothing miraculous that, seeing in this sculpture every tendon, bone, and muscle distinguished from each other in substance and shape, and always indicated where Nature indicated them, it was nothing but natural he should at once recognise their superiority to all other sculpture, because in no other sculpture was this system of Nature so distinctly clear. There was a vitality wanting in the Apollo (majestic beauty as it is) he here found ; he was no longer ashamed of copying fine Nature as it existed ; hour after hour, day after day, night after night, did he dwell, and live, and inhale his being amidst these sublime fragments.

Often has he remained fifteen hours in the pent-house, Park Lane, which sheltered their beauty, with his lantern and his drawing board, examining every foot, every hand, every limb, every breathing body, by moving his solitary candle about, above, or underneath them ; and when he has placed his glimmering light on the ground beneath the mighty back of the Theseus, a vast, broad, and silent shadow, dark and dim, has stretched across the whole gallery ; whilst here and there a transcendant limb, here and there a shattered head, or fighting figure, instinct with life, have trembled into light, and seemed ready to move, so evident was their life and circulation.

So completely has he been imbued with their divinity—so completely did he store his being with their principles—so completely alive was he, from conviction and reason, of their perfection—he would joyfully have died in their defence ; and as midnight was passing, and the very 'witching time of solitude approached, he looked round him as if the faces of the mighty dead were rising

out of the dim shadows, and were glaring on his abstraction.

He fancied Socrates and Plato, Phidias and Polygnotos, Zeuxis and Apelles, Aristoides and Thrasybulus, were floating round the glorious fragments which, in the days of their golden beauty, these men had all worshipped in the splendid temple which glittered on their majestic rock.

So vivid have been his impressions of reality, that he has started up and stared across the misty obscurity, with breathless yet delightful hope that he really saw the spirits of the dead : and thinking an inward prayer to the Great Spirit of all things, that before this generation had passed away, we might all do something to honour our great country, as these men had done to honour theirs ; that our lives might be devoted to refine and elevate the taste, purify and convince the understanding of the British nobility and people, whose love of liberty and truth, moral worth, and heroic independence, made them worthy to be the rivals of the Greeks in art, as they had already proved themselves to be their superiors in government, in morals, and in religion.

Can you wonder, then, after such a process of thought, conviction, and enthusiasm, at his indignation to hear their truth, their beauty, their perfection, brutally and pompously denied by a mere scholar ?

What would you have said of him as an English student, qualified by severe investigation to prove their evident nature, if a selfish fear of his own interest, a paltry apprehension of the consequences of telling truth to power or to learning, had made him cower under the frown of their offended pride ?

The learned despot of the dinner parties of the season had been beaten before on a question of classic knowledge by this very student, (imperfect scholar as he was), and he soon saw, if the unjust denial of the merits of the marbles was continued, if Lord Elgin were perpetually browbeaten by him, wherever he met him, he (the student) must be obliged to take the field again, for in consequence alone of this eminent scholar's opposition, the purchase by the nation was delayed.*

At this critical period, as I have told you, I went all classes of the British people, and settled the question of their perfection; yet, would you believe it? Percival still hesitated: as if we were all mad!

The state of parties at this time was singular: the leading institutions were one and indivisible; the British Gallery did not wish the British people to feel a want of grand art; the Royal Academy wished art to be limited to its own excellence; anything like a ray of light which came forth in spite of their sanction, or without it, was felt by both as an indirect liberty, without leave of Council.

All members of all Institutions in London continually meet during the season, and there is a freemason-sort of instinct, understood by every member of every Institution, how the members of a particular Institution, on a subject belonging to them, wish the members of every other to think on that particular thing.

A sneer against the back of the Theseus and the Elgin Marbles, by a member of one body, with a member of another body, was quite enough to let the latter know

* See Examiner, March 1812. Letters of an English Student on an article by Payne Knight, in the Edinburgh Review of 1810, on Barry.

what he must do during the season; and an awful look of profound doubt at Sir Joseph's that night, let all members of all institutions into the secret, that the moment the Elgin Marbles were mentioned anywhere, their merit must be doubted, for the sake of the authorities in art.

Then Lord and Lady Elgin had separated: her second husband was a Whig: their gallantry being well known, all the Whigs abused Lord Elgin; and Lady Elgin was a Tory, and all the Tories joined the Whigs; so that the back of the Theseus, and the front of the Ilyssus, were abused by Whigs and Tories; and the Metopes and the Frieze were declared to be doubtful by the connoisseurs: the Radicals got into a rage at the base idea of squandering money on headless trunks, and the people cried out—we are starving for bread, and you give us stones.

Every classic connoisseur is a collector, and all are ambitious of leaving their collections to the Museum which shall embody their own taste, and embalm their own name. In comes Lord Elgin, with a collection that defies all competition, if proved to be what it pretended to be.

These, then, were the elements of confusion into which these matchless productions of Phidias were thrown: never did Satan, as he approached chaos, create

“ More universal hubbub, wild,
Of stunning sounds and voices all confused.”

Notwithstanding the self-evident excellence of these divine works,—notwithstanding Lord Elgin proved their nature by comparing the forms of our finest boxers, Jackson, Belcher, Gregson, and Gulley, with them,—eight years passed on, in apathy and apprehension.

West was called a dotard by Byron, because he asserted their superiority; Lord Elgin was abused by

him, Sheridan epigrammatised him, and "The Student" was in all companies considered a wild and extravagant young man: the government would not listen, because they were English, and knew nothing, of course. Lord Farnborough used to regard the Student's arguments in favour of their supremacy with the pitying smile of authority, which knows so well how to freeze ardour, render conviction doubtful, and leave a youth no alternative but to bow and retire.

Mr. Perceval listened to Lord Farnborough; he was a sort of unauthorized "Ministre des Arts" of the Regent's; and all parties began to despair.

At this "*crise de la bataille*," Waterloo was won; Canova was sent officially to Paris, to arrange the departure of the Apollo, &c. for Rome, (1815.) My intimate friend, Hamilton, met Canova at the Duke's in Paris: the Elgin Marbles were often the topic of talk: Canova was officially coming to thank the Prince Regent; and on this important visit rested our only hopes!

In November, 1815, Canova arrived, and was at Brunet's hotel. Wilkie saw him first, and not understanding him, came to the Student, and declared he did not think highly of the Marbles: the Student hurried away to the Foreign Office, where Hamilton was Under-Secretary, and they went to Canova's immediately. After the ceremonies of introduction were over, he asked him, what do you think of the Marbles? He replied, they were the finest things on earth,* and that he would have walked barefoot from Rome to have seen them. He added, the union of life and idea was perfect, and that they would overturn the whole system of form in high art. Hamilton took him the first time he went to the marbles: the Student went

* See 1st Lecture.

with him the second time, and he (Canova) said he always believed the genuine works of the Greeks had ever more of every-day Nature than we saw in the other ancient works.

Backed as all admirers were thus by Canova, the government began to melt, for the ministers saw they must become the ridicule of Europe if they obstinately persisted in their indifference, and in the following year, 1816, a Committee was granted.

On the 23rd of February, the Committee appointed by government were to take a general survey of the Marbles at Burlington House: Lord Elgin begged the Student to meet them, to watch their proceedings, observe the effect of the Marbles on their minds, and to come to him and report.

The members were members of the House; the impression the Marbles made was successful, but there was an air and a tone as if Lord Elgin had been guilty of some undefined wrong. Payne Knight did not come; it were to be wished he had, and that he had dared to utter a breath against them, and from what was observed, he seemed to have made very little way with the Committee: in short, the meeting might be considered highly satisfactory. Croker came, and talked a great deal about the Apollo, to which the members listened with a species of impatience. Hamilton was there, on the part of Lord Elgin, and on finding there was evidently nothing to be alarmed at, the Student hurried away to No. 5, Gloucester Place, and found Lord Elgin in very great anxiety and agitation. The Student soon, however, put him in good spirits. He told his Lordship of the evident tone of the Committee, of the little influence Knight seemed to have, and of the admiration he had heard expressed of the beauty of the works. He told his Lordship he was certain

there was no fear, and, said he, "If Knight perseveres, I will demolish him." Lord Elgin's smile of incredulous amiability was never to be forgotten. The Student saw what it meant. "Do you—a penniless man of genius, without station, rank, or fortune,—presume to suppose *you* can demolish the opinion of Richard Payne Knight, Esq. ? My good friend, I thank you for your kind feelings towards my Marbles, but pray consider Mr. Knight's fortune and rank."

Diplomatists look upon all pure aspirations of confident power, or anticipations of triumph, in a young man of talent, as the mere ebullitions of sanguine inexperience and impudent folly. Lord Elgin did not know the hours of meditation and deduction which the Student had passed in investigating the cause of such perfection as the Marbles exhibited ; he did not know that sound enthusiasm is the consequence, and not the cause, of conviction, and as different from the shallow chatter of boyish affectation as one thing can be from another. With every feeling of regard for what he considered the warmth of the Student's affections more than the conviction of his reason, he shook the Student's hand with the air of high breeding, but evidently feared his head.

The Phygaleian Marbles had just arrived ; Knight and the connoisseurs ran them directly against the Elgin Marbles as their last hope. They were from a temple built by Ictinus, one of the architects of the Parthenon, but full of gross disproportions, though beautifully composed—the designs of a great genius *provincially* executed.

The Student penetrated Knight's motive like lightning, drove up to John Scott, editor of the *Champion*, and he said, if you regard me, the arts, the country, or your own fame, make the Elgin Marble question a leading article (a

novelty in the English press), and I'll be at the Phygealeian instantner.

Scott took fire, wrote two admirable articles in the Champion; the Student giving him facts.

Lord Elgin had told the Student, Scott's paper was more attended to by ministers than any other; that they all read it, and he had heard it praised at their tables; and Scott's two papers were so excellent, and treated the thing so well, as if of great national importance, that Lord Elgin said they had produced very great effect.

Scott had never seen Lord Elgin, and neither had had any communication with the other; therefore it was honourably and nobly done: the Student exposed the disproportions of the Phygealeian on the next Sunday, and checked the affectation of Knight and his friends.

In all societies of literature and rank the strongest feeling was roused: about the Elgin Marbles the question was fairly up. Lord Aberdeen and Wilkins believed Knight infallible; and just at this very moment came the Phygealeian, and to them they and Knight clung as a last resource.

No man would now believe that Knight and his pupils pronounced them to be finer than the Elgin! The Student went to the Museum, and saw them with Taylor Coomb. Their frightful disproportions, and hideous execution, convinced him at once they were the invention of a great man *provincially* executed, as the composition was fine.

In the Morning Chronicle immediately appeared this insidious article, in hopes of influencing the Whigs to oppose the purchase of the Elgin:—

“THE PHYGALEIAN MARBLES.

“The interesting Grecian sculptures discovered in the Temple of Apollo, in Phygalia, by Mr. Cockerell and

other artists, and which have been bought by the British Government, are at length arrived in London, and deposited in the British Museum, where they are now arranging from the drawings of Mr. Cockerell, taken on the spot. They contain a hundred figures, in alto-relievo above two feet, forming two complete subjects of combat; viz., between Centaurs and Lapithæ, and between the Amazons and Heleneans. *They are believed to be the only examples extant of entire subjects of the admirable school of Phidias*, and exhibit the sublimity of poetic imagination, united to the boldness and power of execution, resulting from extensive practice in the greatest school of antiquity. The energy and force displayed in the action of the figures are wonderful, and the variety and unity in the composition show how far the arts must have been carried in the refined ages of Pericles, and will be a most valuable addition to the studies of British artists."

To which the Student replied, the next Sunday, in the Champion, as follows:—

"This is written, I suspect, by the same man who said 'the Elgin Marbles were the work of journeymen, not worthy the name of artists in a less fastidious age*.' Now, so far from these Phygaleian Marbles being the only works of Phidias, they have not the slightest pretensions to be considered by his hand at all. They do not exhibit the sublimity of poetic imagination, but the extravagance of wild mannerism; they do not unite the boldness of execution resulting from practice influenced by principle, but the rashness of violence. Their energy and force are not wonderful, because they overstep the

* See Specimens of Ancient Sculpture, p. 39, art. 74. By Dilettanti Society.

simplicity of temperance ; and the composition is not universally fine, because it is often very bad, and therefore proves, when it is fine, it is from accident, and not from foresight. Instead of showing how far the arts were carried in the age of Pericles, there are sculptors in England who would show how much further they could be carried in the age of British power. They are evidently the production of some country sculptor, one who forgot hands were not longer than faces, and heads never bigger than a fifth or sixth of the figure. In point of fact, I know not whether the Temple from which they were taken was erected after the Parthenon or not, but, from the style of the marbles, I should say it was ; when the Parthenon had made a noise throughout the country, when every town must have been eager to have its temple, and every sculptor eager to imitate its example ; and thus, like all imitators, they carried the fire and beauty at which they aimed to a vicious excess. As to the taste of those who hesitated to acknowledge the beauty of the Elgin marbles, and decided at once without hesitation on Phygaleian ones, nothing need be said. Visconti has settled, by the quotation from Aristotle of ‘ σοφος λιθουργος,’¹ being applied to Phidias, whether or not he worked in marble ; and—setting aside the intense evidence of their being by a great mind, first, from the ease of their execution, proving that practice had given his hand power ; then from the principles of life, proving the science of the mind that directed it ; and lastly, from the beauty of the conception, proving the genius that governed the whole—where would it be more likely for Phidias to put his hand than on the finest temple in Athens, built by his patron, Pericles, when he (Phidias) was director of all public works ? There are one or two groups very fine in these Phygaleian marbles, but still approaching to

manner; and, in most instances, they are entirely mannered. United with the Elgin collection, their errors will do no injury to the student, and both together will form the finest museum in Europe."

Lord Elgin told the Student the effect of this letter was decided. There is nothing more cowardly than learned ignorance, and the whole clique, with Knight at their head, talked rather smaller the ensuing week.

Croker stood up now, fiercely and bravely, in the Committee, and Knight and his friends were checked and angry. The day for examination approached; Lord Elgin was allowed to put down whoever he liked, and he named William Lock, Esq. of Norbury Park, the Student, and two others. Day after day passed on, and neither Mr. Lock nor the Student were called up; the other two were, and dismissed after a question or two: whilst those who were unfriendly to Lord Elgin, or doubtful of the Marbles, had every facility given them for unfavourable reply. Lord Elgin was literally bullied as if he had been a culprit.

Lord Elgin was very impatient for the Student to be examined, and kept riding down and inquiring when it was to be; and every day he was promised, and every day passed off as before.

This is Knight's influence, said the Student to * * *. I am sure of it, said he. Bankes says, "You will not be examined, *out of delicacy to Knight*." Very well, replied the Student; I, who have been the only artist admitted to draw years before any one else was, except West,—who have painted a picture, *Dentatus*, on the principles I discovered there,—am denied an opportunity of giving the result of my knowledge to the Committee; it is unjust to Lord Elgin and to myself: I'll appeal to the public. * * * smiled, as if incredulous of his power. He told Lord

Elgin, "I'll make Knight remember the Elgin Marbles to his grave." He looked solemn, and even half smiled. The Student went home, musing on that strange incredulity of one's species when one announces a capacity to see deeper than one's older friends. He retired to his painting-room, with his great picture of Jerusalem before him, and wrote immediately the most effective letter of his life. "It has saved the Marbles," said Lawrence, "but it will ruin you!" True enough; for neither the royal family, nobility, nor patrons, ever forgave the truths which poured out with the ink as he dashed his thoughts on the paper before him. It was sent to both Examiner and Champion*, and the effect in high and middle life was sweeping and effective.

"ON THE JUDGMENT OF CONNOISSEURS BEING PREFERRED
TO THAT OF PROFESSIONAL MEN.—THE ELGIN MARBLES,
ETC.

Ceci s'adresse à vous, esprits du dernier ordre,
Qui n'étant bons à rien cherchez sur tout à mordre,
Vous vous tourmentez vainement.
Croyez-vous que vos dents impriment leurs outrages,
Sur tant de beaux ouvrages ?
Ils sont pour vous d'airain, d'acier, de diamant.

"That the nobility and higher classes of this country have so little dependence on their own judgment in art, is principally owing to a defect in their education. In neither University is painting ever remembered. Its relations, its high claims, the conviction that taste is necessary to the accomplishment of a refined character, and to complete the glory of a great country, neither the public tutors of the nobility, nor the private tutors of the Prince, ever feel themselves, or ever impress upon their pupils. Thus, the educated, the wealthy, the high born,

* March 17th, 1816.

grow up, and issue out to their respective public duties in the world, deficient in a feeling the cultivation of which has brightened the glory of the greatest men and most accomplished princes. But, soon feeling their defects, and soon anxious to supply them, they either fly to that species of art which they can comprehend—the mere imitation of the common objects of our commonest perceptions—or, if they be desirous to protect elevated art, being too proud to consult the artist of genius, they resign their judgment to the gentleman of pretension. He that is learned in antiquity, and versed in its customs, is supposed to be equally learned in nature, and sensible to its beauties. To know one master's touch, and another master's peculiarity—to trace the possessors of a picture as we trace the genealogy of a family—to be alive to an error, and insensible to a beauty—are the great proofs of a refined taste and a sound judgment; and are sufficient reasons to induce an amiable nobleman, desirous of protecting art, to listen to his advice, and to bow to his authority. In no other profession is the opinion of the man who has studied it for his amusement preferred to that of him who has devoted his soul to excel in it. No man will trust his limb to a connoisseur in surgery; no minister would ask a connoisseur in war how a campaign is to be conducted; no nobleman would be satisfied with the opinion of a connoisseur in law on disputed property—and why should a connoisseur of an art, more exclusively than any other without the reach of common acquirement, be preferred to the professional man? What reason can be given why the painter, the sculptor, and the architect, should not be exclusively believed most adequate to decide on what they best understand, as well as the surgeon, the lawyer, and the general?

“I have been roused to these reflections from fearing

that the Committee of the House of Commons on the Elgin Marbles will be influenced by the opinion of Mr. Payne Knight, and other connoisseurs, in the estimation of their beauty. Surely they will not select this gentleman to estimate the beauty of these beautiful productions ! Are they aware of the many mortified feelings with which he must contemplate them ? Do they know the death-blow his taste and judgment have received in consequence of their excellence being established in public opinion ? Have they been informed that at first he denied their originality ? Surely they never can be so little acquainted with human nature as to expect an impartial estimate from any human being under such circumstances. Perhaps they never heard that Mr. Payne Knight at first denied their originality ; then said that they were of the time of Hadrian ; then that they were the works of journeymen, not worthy of the name of artists ; and now, being driven from all his surmises by the proper influence of all artists and men of natural taste, doubts at last they may be original, but are too much broken to be of any value !

“ Far be it from Mr. Payne Knight to know that the great principles of life can be proved to exist in the most broken fragment as well as in the most perfect figure. Is not life as palpable in the last joint of your forefinger as in the centre of your heart ? On the same principle, break off a toe from any fragment of the Elgin Marbles, and there I will prove the great consequences of vitality, acting externally, to be. The reasons are these : all objects, animate and inanimate, in nature, but principally men and animals, are the instruments of a painter and sculptor, as influenced by intention or passion, acting on feature or form, excited by some interesting

object, or some powerful event. Man being the principal agent, and his features and form being the principal vehicle of conveying ideas, the first thing to ascertain is the great characteristic distinction of man in form and feature, as a species, and as an intellectual being, distinguished from animals. The next thing to be ascertained is, the great causes of his motion as a machine directed by his will: and the last, what of these causes of motion are excited at any particular passion or intention. We know not how an intention acts by the will on the frame any more than we know what vitality is,—we only know it by its consequences; and the business of the artist is to represent the consequences of an idea acting on the form and feature on the parts which it does influence, and the parts which it does not, so truly as to excite in the mind of the spectator the exact associations of the feeling intended to be conveyed. The bones are the foundation of the form, and the muscles and tendons the means by which he moves them as his passions excite him. Each particular intention or passion will excite a certain number of these means, and none more or less than are requisite; the rest will remain unexcited. The bones, the things moved, and the muscles, the things moving, are all covered by skin; and the mechanism of the art is to express the passion or intention, and its consequences, by the muscles that are, and those which are not, influenced, and to exhibit the true effect of both, acting beneath, and showing above, the skin that covers them. When the mind is thoroughly informed of the means beneath the skin, the eye instantly comprehends the hint above it; and when any passion or intention is wanted to be expressed, the means and their consequences, if the artist be deeply qualified, will be as

complete in form, and as true in effect, as nature ; and the idea represented will be doubly effectual by the perfection of the means of representation. If the character be a god, his feature and form must be built on these unalterable principles ; for how can we represent a god but by elevating our own qualifications ?

“ These are the principles, then, of the Greek standard of figure :—First, to select what is peculiarly human in form, feature, and proportion ; then to ascertain the great causes of motion ; to remember that the opposite contours of a limb can never be the same from inherent formation, nor of a trunk if the least inclined from the perpendicular ; that the form of a part varies with its action or its repose ; and that all action is by the predominance of some of the causes of motion over the others, for if all were equally to act the body would be stationary. The peculiar characteristics of intellect, and causes of motion, and none more or less, being selected—as external shape depends on internal organization, acting on the external covering the forms will be essential. This is the standard of man’s figure as a species, and the principle by which to estimate the period of all the works of antiquity. The various characters of humanity must be left to the artist’s own choice and selection ; and an ideal form must never be executed without the curb of perpetual and immediate reference to nature.

“ It is this union of nature with ideal beauty,—the probabilities and accidents of bone, flesh, and tendon, from extension, flexion, compression, gravitation, action, or repose, that rank at once the Elgin Marbles above all other works of art in the world. The finest form that man ever imagined, or God ever created, must have been

formed on these eternal principles. The Elgin Marbles will as completely overthrow the old antique, as ever one system of philosophy overthrew another more enlightened: were the Elgin Marbles lost, there would be as great a gap in art, as there would in philosophy if Newton had never existed. Let him that doubts it, study them as I have done, for eight years daily, and he will doubt it no longer. They have thrown into light principles which would only have been discovered by the inspiration of successive geniuses, if ever at all; because we had what the Greeks had not—an antique and a system to mislead us, and misplaced veneration, and early habits, to root out. In painting, on the same principles, they will completely annihilate that strange system, that colour, and light, and shadow, though a consequence of the nature of things, are incompatible with the expression of a refined passion and beautiful fancy, or a terrible conception by the imitation of natural objects; as if they were not more likely to detract from the intellect in either, by being execrable, than by being consistent with the subject of the expression displayed.

“Every truth of shape, the result of the inherent organization of man as an intellectual being;—every variation of that shape, produced by the slightest variation of motion, in consequence of the slightest variation of intention, acting on it;—every result of repose on flesh as a soft substance, and on bone as a hard, both being influenced by the common principles of life and gravitation;—every harmony of line in composition, from geometrical principle, all proving the science of the artist;—every beauty of conception proving his genius; and every grace of execution proving that practice had given his hand power,—

can be shewn to exist in the Elgin Marbles.* And yet, these are the productions, the beauty, the workmanship, and originality of which, Mr. Payne Knight denied ! It is of these works that he thus writes in *The Specimens of Ancient Sculpture* by the Dilletanti Society, p. xxxix. art. 74 :—

“ ‘Of Phidias’s general style of composition, the friezes and metopes of the Temples of Minerva at Athens, published by Mr. Stuart, and since brought to England, may afford us competent information ; but as they are merely architectural sculptures, executed from his designs under his direction, probably by workmen scarcely ranked among artists, and meant to be seen at the height of forty feet from the eye, they can throw little light on the more important details of the art.’

“ Now, I should wish to ask the most skilful observer that ever looked at one of the friezes, or at a horse’s leg, or at a rider’s arm, or even a horse’s ear in it,—what he thinks of such a modest assertion ! Does Mr. Knight remember that divine form in a metope, grappling a

* There is a supposition, that because the Greeks made the right use of anatomical knowledge, in shewing only the consequences of its internal muscular action on the skin, and not displaying it, as it is when the skin is off, that they were unacquainted with it. Is it likely, that a people so remarkable for acting on principle in everything connected with the arts, should, in this most important point, act without it ? I will defy an eye, ten times more refined than even a Greek’s ever was, to execute the infinite varieties of the human body, influenced by internal and external organization, mutually acting on each other, without being first thoroughly versed in its structure. Of what use would be names to cavities and projections on the surface of the body, which vary in form at every hair’s-breadth motion, till the mind is informed how little does the eye see ? Mengs said, fifty years ago, that we had not got the works which the ancients estimated as their best ; and had Mengs seen the Elgin Marbles he would have been convinced of it.

Centaur by the throat, and heaving up his chest, and drawing in his breath, preparing to annihilate his enemy:—or the one, in all the loosened relaxation of death under the Centaur's legs, who prances in triumph;—or the other, who presses forward, while he dashes back his opponent with a tendinous vigour, as if lightning dashed through his frame? Yet Mr. Payne Knight is listened to by the nobility, and referred to by ministers:—These are the productions which Mr. Payne Knight says *may be* original!—May be!—There are some men who have that hateful propensity of sneering at all which the world holds high, sacred, or beautiful; not with the view of dissipating doubt, or giving the delightful comfort of conviction, but to excite mysterious belief of their own sagacity, to cloke their own envy, to chuckle if they can confuse, and revel if they can chill the feelings:—according to them, love is nothing but lust:—religion is nothing but delusion; all high views and elevated notions, wild dreams and distempered fancies. No man leaves off from what they have written, but with the dark starts of a night-mare,—a distaste for beauty, a doubt of truth, an indifference towards virtue, and a confusion about religion: but, most of all, a pang, and a deep one, to see the mistake nature made, in giving a portion of capacity to beings of such heartless propensities. When I exposed Mr. Knight's sophisms on art, and his mistakes from Pliny, four years ago, I was told, as a reason why I should not have done so, that he was a leading man at the Institution! Why this was one of my strongest reasons for doing it. It was because he was a leading man, and because he possessed influence, that I was determined to shew the futility of his principles in art. When a man, possessing influence, holds pernicious opinions,

he becomes an example to thousands whom cowardice and timidity would for ever keep in awe without such a sanction. While I live, or have an intellect to detect a difference, or a hand to write, never will I suffer a leading man in art to put forth pernicious sophisms without doing my best to refute them ; or unjustly to censure fine works by opinions without doing my best to expose them ; that is, if they are of sufficient consequence to endanger the public taste :—and really, such opinions as those quoted on works so beautiful, so intensely exquisite ;—works which will produce a revolution in both arts,—to which Canova was inclined to kneel and worship ;—opinions, too, uttered in such despotic defiance of all candour and common sense, are not to be borne. I should consider myself a traitor to my art and my country's taste, and the dignity of my pursuit, if I suffered them to pass unnoticed : to these divine things I owe every principle of art I may possess. I never enter among them without bowing to the Great Spirit that reigns within them ; I thank God daily, I was in existence on their arrival, and will ever do so to the end of my life. Such a blast will Fame blow of their grandeur, that its roaring will swell out as Time advances ; and nations now sunk in barbarism, and ages yet unborn, will in succession be roused by its thunder, and refined by its harmony—pilgrims from the remotest corners of the earth will visit their shrine, and be purified by their beauty.

“ B. R. HAYDON.

“ P. S. There is a supposition that feeling alone enabled the great Greek artists to arrive at such perfection : but surely the capacity to feel a result is very different from the power to produce the sensation of it in others, by an

imitative art. After feeling a result, to produce the same feeling in others you must exercise your understanding, and practise your hand: you then begin immediately with the why and the wherefore; the how and the what—your understanding is thus stored with reasons and principles. The first great requisite, of course, is a capacity to feel a result; the next, an understanding to ascertain the means of producing in others what you have felt yourself; and the third is the feeling again, to tell you when you have done what you wanted to do. The understanding being thoroughly stored with principles of the means of imitation, and the hand thoroughly ready from practice, a result is no sooner felt, than the understanding at once supplies the principle on which it is to be executed by imitation, and the hand instantly executes it, till at last, feeling, understanding, and hand, go so instantaneously together, as not to be perceived, in their respective departments, by the possessor; and all resolve themselves into feeling, which at first was the instigator, and then becomes the director. A result having the appearance of being easily produced, induces the world to conclude that feeling alone is the cause; ignorant what effects of the understanding and hand were at first requisite before they could so completely obey the feeling as to be identified with it.

“I most sincerely hope, that this fatal proof of Mr. Payne Knight’s complete want of judgment in refined art, will have its due effect:—that it will show they are the most likely to know an art to its foundation, who have given up their life to the investigation of its principles; and will impress the noblemen with this truth, that by listening to the authoritative dictates of such men, they risk sharing the disgrace of their exposure.”

Lord Elgin said, Knight was done up; and shaken in public opinion was the whole clique.

I believe the Committee now felt they had better have examined the Student: and what delicacy was due to Knight, who had shewn so little to Lord Elgin? And what had the Student done? Why, exposed his suppressing a passage in Pliny, Knight supposing no artist would take the trouble, or have the knowledge, to find him out.

The public voice so completely and enthusiastically responded to this letter, that the patrons were afraid to let the Student see their displeasure; but he saw concealed anger lurking beneath the elegance of their manner; they found out he must still depend on them, and they resolved to let him feel it.

In a week his painting-room was again crowded with rank, beauty, and fashion, after two years' desertion, to such excess, that he ordered the fore door to be left open!

Lord Mulgrave, always regarding him, had, just at the very moment the letter appeared, laid a plan before the Directors to send the Student out to Italy. It would have been done, but the moment the letter appeared, he said to a friend,—“What is he about?” “Upon my word, I don't know, my Lord.”—“Here have I been planning to get him a handsome income for three years, and send him to Italy, and out comes this indiscreet and abominable letter!”

The letter was translated into Italian and French, and dispersed over Europe; Rumohr found it and another on the Ilyssus in the Magliabecchian Library, (Florence,) and Lord Elgin told him, Danneker, the German sculptor, shewed it to him; and in Germany it prepared the way for Lord Elgin's enthusiastic reception. The great Goethe

spoke of it when he noticed his *Essay on the Venetian and Elgin Horses' heads* ; and the criticism can be found in his works.

Thus we have now brought these divine productions to the second period of their romantic history ; but even here the bad passions of Lord Elgin's revilers pursued them ; evidence against him personally was greedily listened to ; classic learning, however ignorant of art, was preferred to sound knowledge of truth and nature ; and nothing but the unqualified praise of the artists examined could have ensured a victory.

The Committee went on with their labours : Lawrence, Westmacott, West, Nollekens, and Chantrey, did themselves great honour by their fearless evidence : yet Knight's influence set so decidedly against Lord Elgin, that exactly as it was of no avail against his Marbles, they made it tell with exquisite skill against himself, and deprived him absolutely of legitimate return for his mere expenses, leaving out interest entirely.—(See Report.)

	£
The charges for artists, moulders, removals of the first load, were 139,000 piastres ...	10,700
The subsequent charges for the second load were 224,700	17,300
The expenses of the third load	12,000
The expenses of loss and recovery of cargo of Mentor	5,000
Expenses in England	6,000
	<hr/>
Without interest	51,000
	<hr/>
Knight's estimate of value	25,000
Lord Aberdeen's	35,000
Hamilton's	60,000

Lord Aberdeen's was selected—an intimate friend of Knight's;* and thus Lord Elgin, who refused Napoleon's offer, lost £16,000 by his preference of old England.

This is the reward public servants always get, who prefer her honour to their own interest.

At last, after every species of cavil that ingenuity could devise, to obstruct, these Marbles were purchased by the State: on seeing the last of them safe in the Museum, the Student gave three hearty cheers. He had watched them, studied them, and helped to save them. He attended the present Emperor of Russia at his first visit, after they were bought. He had moulded the greater part of them by Lord Elgin's leave, and from these moulds casts were first introduced into Russia, and to Scotland, and Italy, before the official casts.

Now comes the question, was Lord Elgin right or wrong to remove the marbles? You will say, decidedly right. No, say the French; he was decidedly wrong.

The French would have been greatly better pleased to have got them themselves. That's natural. We had no such sacrilegious notion, say the French. Then pray, I always say, how came Choisseul Gouffier to remove a metope, and a part of a frieze, which Lord Elgin brought

* Troubles never come in single files, but whole battalions—as Shakspeare says; about this time Knight bought a head of Flora, for antique, which turned out to be executed by Pistrucci (of the Mint). Here was another proof of his real ignorance. The Student destroyed his evidences against the marbles printed in the *Dilletanti* volume. The Quarterly took up his judgment on the Flora, and never was perhaps any human being, who had assumed so despotical a position in society, so effectually humbled. However, he lived to acknowledge his errors. Lord Elgin told me, he walked with him round the Museum before he died, and he candidly said to Lord Elgin, he had been wrong, and saw it: this was manly.

B. R. H.

from Athens, and sent over to him? Before him, in 1687, the Venetian general tried to remove the horses of the pediment, and broke them to powder.

In 1789, Gouffier began and got down a metope, and was obliged to leave it. In 1800 comes Lord Elgin, and, seeing their daily destruction by travellers and Turks, decided that the only chance of their salvation was removing them altogether.

Can any man, after what has since happened in Greece, regret what he did? Would people have had Lord Elgin quietly sit still before the Parthenon, and see it broken to bits daily, because the etiquette of the Ambassadorial character forbade his interfering? How would the press of Europe have rung again with the cowardly prejudices of Lord Elgin?

Had Lord Elgin entertained any private hopes of pecuniary profit, had he greedily accepted the magnificent offers of Napoleon, then it might have been quite correct for the State to punish such trading in the habits of its public characters: but Lord Elgin embarrassed himself and his heirs for years by his passion to save the Marbles. He lost £16,000, as I have proved to you, besides the interest; and he refused all the temptations Napoleon offered, and for which refusal he always attributed his imprisonment and ill usage in or near the Pyrenees.

The absurdity of suffering etiquette to interfere between the Elgin Marbles and their ruin would have been like the Spanish King, who was placed by his official person too near a large fire; his Majesty, finding it likely he should be roasted alive, wished to be removed further back, but the official person had retired, and it was not etiquette for any other courtier present to touch the Royal chair; the official messenger was dispatched

for the official chair mover, according to etiquette, but before he could arrive the King was a cinder.

Never was any human being more astonished than Lord Elgin at the first burst of abuse which assailed him. So far from being abused as he was, he deserved the public thanks of the country ; and no man present who is commercial but will admit he ought not to have lost £16,000.

It was insinuated that, in removing these works, sometimes portions of architecture were broken. Granted : and what then ?

If the whole Parthenon were blown up to-morrow it could be rebuilt in England or in Greece as finely as ever ; but if the Theseus and Ilyssus were destroyed, who living could restore them to us ? The principles of architecture are discovered, the principles of those of their sculpture are not so defined ; therefore the injury done to architecture by the breaking of an architrave was not to be mentioned, if a Theseus was saved in the attempt ; the first could be replaced, the latter never.

The Student had no private obligation to Lord Elgin ; he owed him nothing but the favour of early admission to draw—one, indeed, never to be repaid ; he acted, as he has always done, and always will do, for the sake of the art, and the honour of his country.

In taking leave of this delightful subject, and of this wonderful people, the Greeks,—when one considers their habits of debating, discussing and walking so constantly in the open air ; their beautiful country, and splendid city, so continually before their eyes, in addition to their admirable games for exciting ambition, their gymnasiums, where the naked figure was so eternally in action, their

admiration of beauty, and prizes for its pre-eminence, their love of heroism and self-sacrifice, their idolatrous and poetical religion, and sunny climate,—there is no longer any wonder at their perfect art.

Can you believe that the oratory of Demosthenes was not raised to the highest enthusiasm and power when he addressed them at the Pnyx ?

Imagine, in the flourishing times of the Republic, this open space of 12,000 square yards, filled with 6000 people sitting in groups.

In the presence of this vast multitude one man ascended the steps of the bema, or pedestal, in the centre.

Before him, to fire his imagination, lay the beautiful city, a splendid mass of temples and towers. Beneath him, the Agora, filled with statues and altars to their heroes and their gods. Beyond him was the Areopagus, the most venerable tribunal, or Mars Hill, where St. Paul addressed the Athenians : above him was the Acropolis, with its temples glittering in the air : in the midst the great statue of Minerva Promachus, with helmet and spear, frowning on all who dared to attack the height : and rising in stately splendour on the right was this very Parthenon in gold and marble : to the north the olive groves and sunny villages of the plain, bounded by the craggy ridges of Parnes and Citheron, the scenes of so many tales of poetry, patriotism, and Bacchanalian revel.

Think of a great orator on a popular subject addressing a people acute beyond comprehension, with such a picture before their eyes, varying on every aspect of sun and cloud, and then for a moment imagine yourselves in the

old House of Commons, hot from the fume of candles, and the foul air of a Session, built in a part of the town originally a marsh, a member on his legs, drawling out to his exhausted listeners a long detail of facts, or, if in office, talking against time, whilst ministers get their dinners; one half the House sound asleep, and the other longing to be so; now and then a door bouncing; now and then a candle dripping; now and then an old Scotch Radical member appearing at the door which led to the drinking room, scenting of brandy and cigars.

Can you wonder every appeal to the imagination is scouted, poetry quizzed, and sentiment a signal for every member to run to Bellamy's for relief?

For the blue mountains of Citheron Demosthenes would encounter the yellow glories of a November fog. Our greatest orators, Chatham, Pitt, Canning, Fox, were destroyed twenty years before their time by their nightly labours in this unventilated charnel-house of health, which, if any man wanted a model for a house to destroy human life, he could not have had a better model. And yet without statues, without pictures, without ornaments, without decent comforts or decent ventilation, what genius, what thoughts, what eloquence, have we not heard; and how all these petty abominations were forgotten, when Pitt, Burke, Fox, or Canning, rose to reply!

I maintain these inconveniences are not necessary; they are useless difficulties, which try the strength of great men, and hurry them to their graves. More taste, more love of decoration, would by no means hinder the eloquence, and would certainly add to the happiness of the members and taste of the people.

Again, consider the nature of a Greek theatre: the

background to the stage was not a paltry scene, but a real natural landscape*.

When the *Agamemnon* of *Æschylus* was acted, and, as you sat riveted to your seats, out rushed *Clytemnestra*, glorying in the murder of her husband, and you heard his dying groans : whilst you shook with the unearthly screams of *Cassandra*, who was seized with madness and fury as she approached the palace, and screeched *Apollon ! Apollon !* you saw the hills of *Mycene* at the back of the stage where these horrors took place.

If the *Medea* of *Euripides* was acted, before you were the blue hills of *Corinth* ; if *Salamis* was represented, beneath you lay the bay where the battle was fought ; so that whatever was the genius of Greece, it was stimulated by everything physical, natural, or poetical, which could rouse it ; while, whatever may be the genius of Britain, it seems to be the principle that the greater the obstacle the greater the glory ; and if a Briton cannot produce works, in spite of every misery which can afflict a human being, he has not got—what all delight in, from the Prime Minister to the bull-dog—viz. pluck, the characteristic of us all.

Thus you see what complication of motives influence human judgment : had we lost those works, which we were near doing†, it would not have been from the honest conviction that they were not entitled to be purchased, but because the pride of learned men was mortified that the public had decided their beauty in spite of their dissent ; because the possessor had enemies who took the part of

* Dr. Wordsworth.

† £30,000 was lodged at a London banker's, to be ready, on the part of the present King of Bavaria (in case of accidents), to advance on purchase.

his divorced-lady ; because many people had tried in vain to do what Lord Elgin succeeded in doing ; because the French were baffled by his energy, and the Turks were pathetically touched, they had nothing more to smash ; because people got enraged in proportion as their merit was so indisputable that it defied contradiction, and envy burst forth under every disguise, and was baffled by every energy which honest indignation could rouse in defence.

I therefore confidently assume, if Lord Elgin's conduct were to be put to vote in this assembly—the ayes would unquestionably have it, and that we shall hear no more of the shocking nature of Lord Elgin's heartless devastations in Greece*.

* The Ægina Marbles are, in style, early and rigid ; the Marbles of the Temple of Theseus are an advance towards the union of nature and idea ; and the Elgin Marbles complete the union in perfection—vitality in stone. Neither the Phygaleian or Lycian are sufficiently characteristic in style to denote an epoch in the progress to the perfection of form.

B. R. H.



LECTURE XIV.

ON

BEAUTY:

Auld Nature swears the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O :
Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,
And then she made the lasses, O.—BURNS.



LECTURE XIV.

ON BEAUTY.

WHETHER CAUSED BY ASSOCIATION (A WORK OF TIME),
BY IMMEDIATE IMPRESSION THROUGH THE EYE, ON
THE BRAIN, BEFORE ANY ASSOCIATION CAN TAKE
PLACE.—WHETHER ASSOCIATION BE THE CAUSE OR
THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE IMPRESSION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IN the Lectures I have had such great pleasure in delivering to you, you will remember I proceeded at first with the bones, as the basis of the human figure. Secondly, with the muscles, the means of its action, expression, and gesture, as influenced by the will excited by the brain. Thirdly, I compared the form and skull of Man and Quadruped, placing the Quadruped on his heels and toes like the human being. Fourthly, by such comparison I trust I proved to your conviction what was essentially human, and what must be the standard human form, and confirmed the evidence by reference to the immortal works of our great masters, the Greeks. I then proceeded to shew you the principles of composition,

colour, and invention; and now we come to the most important result of all, viz. BEAUTY.—What is Beauty? without which, all our previous principles, exemplified by practice, would fail to enchant the world.

No modern artists, not excepting Raffaele, Correggio, or Michael Angelo, ever equalled the ancients in this quality of face and figure;—the ancients seemed to have hit exactly, what degree of fitness, proportion, unity, curve, and colour in nature and art, was adapted to excite the emotion of beauty in the human mind, and never to have failed once, down even to the form of a milk-jug!

In expression, however terrific—in action, however powerful—in gesture, however violent—they were the expressions, actions, and gestures, always under the guidance of Beauty.

There is no subject which has occupied ancients and moderns so incessantly, as the theory of the emotions so produced.

Whether it be a simple sensation at once felt, when felt for the first time, antecedent to all experience; whether it be a complex one, unfelt till the imagination be excited by trains of associated thoughts previously remembered; whether Plato be right in affirming “that nothing is beautiful, but what is morally good;” whether it consist in proportion, fitness, waving lines, or unity, as physically considered; whether Burke be right, in maintaining, according to Lord Jeffrey, that the emotion of beauty is a relaxation of fibre in the being who feels it; or Reynolds, that it is the medium between extremes; or Alison, that there is nothing beautiful independent of association; whether beauty can alternately be reduced to all these theories, or there is but one that is the true one, has not yet been ascertained.

It is quite clear that a great artist goes very little way in theorizing alone; he must by form, by colour, by expression, whatever may be the theory, excite the emotion of beauty in his spectators; he must do something in his art: meditation alone will never paint a picture or cut a statue.

It appears to me that the emotion of beauty cannot be reduced to one principle;—sometimes it is a simple sensation at once excited by the sign—sometimes a complex one depending on association. Sometimes the form and face which contain virtue, are ugly, like Socrates;—and sometimes, however detestable is sin, the most noble, the most heroic, the most beautiful form and face express it—like Satan's!

Though beauty, morally, may always be applied to virtue, and ugliness always applied to vice, yet sometimes the meridian between extremes is a cause; and sometimes proportion—fitness—undulation of line—perhaps association from form and colour and expression, may be as often the cause; but, I maintain, there is something in the form and the colour that rouses the emotion of beauty, before any association can take place, from intellectual expression, and that association is subsequent to the first impression on the brain, and not prior to it, or at the same moment with it, if the impression be the first impression made on the individual.

“Beauty,” says the distinguished writer and amiable man, (Lord Jeffrey), in the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, page 171, “is that property in objects, which are recommended to the power of taste; the reverse of ugliness—the primary and most general object of love and admiration.”

First, let us see how this property in objects is recom-

mended to the power of taste, before we say anything of taste itself.

"It is a law of our nature," says Dr. Reid, "that we perceive not external objects, unless certain impressions be made by the object itself upon the organ (the eye and ear,) upon the brain."*

All impressions upon the organ of sense must be communicated to the nerves, and by them to the brain: this is known to anatomists.

First, then, the object makes an impression on the organ—the organ is a medium to impress the nerve—and the nerve is a rail-road to convey an impression to the brain. There, says Reid, the material part ends; the rest is all intellectual: that is, the deductions and associations in consequence of this process of impression from external objects to the thinking faculty.

We now come to taste. Reynolds says, the faculty of taste is the power of distinguishing right from wrong; rather, I should say, the power of selecting the beautiful from the ugly in everything intellectual, or physical, conveyed by the senses to the brain, for the exercise of its inherent organization.†

"The natural appetite of the human mind," says Reynolds, "is for truth; whether that truth result from the real agreement, or equality of original ideas among themselves, from the agreement of the representation of any object with things represented, or, from the correspondence of the several parts with each other in any arrangement. It is the same taste, says he, which relishes

* Essay II. Chap. IV.

† Burke says (in his introduction to the Sublime and Beautiful,) "That Taste is that faculty or faculties of the mind which are affected with, or form a judgment of, the works of imagination or elegant arts."

a demonstration in geometry, that is pleased with the resemblance of a picture to an original, and with the harmony of music!

"All these," proceeds Sir Joshua, "have unutterable and fixed foundations in Nature, and are therefore equally investigated by reason, and known by study; some with more, and some with less reason, but all exactly in the same way. A picture that is unlike, is false; disproportionate ordonnance of parts is not right, because it cannot be true, until it ceases to be a contradiction to assert that the parts have no relation to a whole.

"Colouring is true, when it is naturally adapted to the eye, from brightness, from softness, from resemblance: because they agree with their great prototype—Nature—and therefore are true, as true as mathematical demonstration, but known to be true only to those who study these things."

In answer to some part of this beautiful deduction, permit me to say, it is not the same taste which relishes a demonstration in geometry, the harmony of music, or the beauty of a picture; but a very different taste. It may be the same love of truth, but not the same taste; because if taste be, as it assuredly is, the power of selecting the beautiful from the ugly in nature, poetry, painting, or music, the taste which relishes a mathematical demonstration, is not the faculty of selecting the beautiful from the ugly, but the true from the false; a very different power producing a very different emotion, and referable at once to an organization of brain altogether different.

Reynolds says, the truths of fine taste are known only to those who study these things. How, then, do the mass of mankind declare things to be beautiful or sublime,

if these things were known only to those who study these things?

Great works in art, get not their fame for beauty from the opinion of the technical student, but from the unbiassed impulses of the mass of mankind, who do not study these things, or any principles of their emotion; and from the unbiassed decision of the mass of mankind, whose susceptibility by nature to what is beautiful and sublime, antecedent to all association or reflection, and superior to all instruction, confirm the truth of the taste of the genius and inventor, who first by his selection, and then by his execution, has touched the chords of every human heart, and they vibrate, without the owners inquiring why, or having time at the instant for any species of reflective deduction.

It appears to me, therefore, to be a more just definition, to consider taste, as applied to poetry, painting, music, and nature, to be the power of selecting the beautiful from the ugly; as applied to mathematics, the power of selecting the true from the false; and as applied to morals, the power of preferring the virtuous to the evil. But they are not the same powers in essence or application.

The more one dwells on the emotions of beauty, strictly so meant, the more one is inclined to believe that, morally, mentally, and physically, it has its origin altogether in woman. Consider the face and form of woman, in its perfection and its associations, as the base of all beauty, morally or by form; and as every object in creation approaches, by colour, form, or association, the emotion this form produces, and it approaches to or departs from, is entitled, or is not, to be considered the emotion of the beautiful; and has ever done so, from the beginning of the world, and her first appearance on it.

First of all, says Lord Jeffrey, "Is beauty a simple sensation: that is, felt before understood?" He says, no, because no such thing happens, as all men not agreeing in objects of simple sensation: whereas, "all men," says he, "whose organization is perfect, do not agree about beauty."

"All men," proceeds he in proof, "agree grass to be green; or if they disagree, they are insane, or destitute of the organ concerned*."

Now, gentlemen, all men do not allow grass to be green; for there was a celebrated man (Dr. Dalton) who saw grass to be scarlet! "Then," would say Lord Jeffrey, "he is insane, or destitute of the organ." Of course I do not deny, but affirm, that principle; it is the basis of my whole system; but what organ, I ask Lord Jeffrey, of the brain, or the sense, or the nerve through which the brain is affected by the sense? Certainly not of the sense, for the eye of this celebrated man was perfect; but of course the organ of the brain which receives the impressions of the sense was imperfect.

You thus see, the assertion, that "no such thing happens" as men disagreeing about a simple sensation, falls to the ground at once without hope, because we had a distinguished living example, in refutation, well known; and there are hundreds who, for want of celebrity, depend on it, we never hear of.

Thus Lord Jeffrey, at the outset, takes up a position

* Burke had the same delusion, for in page 7 of his Introduction of Sublime and Beautiful, he says, "The manner of perceiving external objects is in all men the same." What is light to one eye is light to another.

from which we have driven him, "au pas de charge," most victoriously.

He says, men whose organization is perfect do not agree about beauty; that depends entirely if the organization alluded to be the eye or the brain: on that hinges the whole question. Men may be perfect in sense, sight, touch, taste, hearing, and yet be so utterly deficient in brain to receive beautiful impressions, that when others, equally perfect in senses, do perceive beauty by a more perfect organization in that power, you then argue there can be no such thing as beauty really existing as a quality of form or colour, because if there were both men must see it alike. Surely, if the perception depended on the external sense, and not on the internal faculty. Men have perfect sight, and yet do not see colour, or have any delight in it: men have imperfect sight, as I have, and yet have the most exquisite sensibilities from the perception of colours. So man may have the dullest vision, and yet see beauty; and possess the most perfect sight, and yet not see beauty in anything.

Therefore, I maintain the perception of beauty depends always on the organization of that internal power which receives the impressions of sight, and not upon the organization of sight, as the origin, by conveyance, of the impression

Locke's theory was, that the human mind was a sheet of white paper to receive any impression; but he should have acknowledged that there is brown paper, and whity-brown paper, foolscap and post; and this is all I contend for.

The gardens and dress of our ancestors, says Lord Jeffrey, appear ridiculous in our eyes; therefore, he infers,

there can be no beauty in form. I reply, do the gardens and dress of the Greeks appear so? Certainly not; and solely because they are conducted on the principles which excite the emotion of beauty elsewhere. Thus Reynolds has so managed the dress of our ancestors as to produce emotions of beauty, in arrangement, and colour, and form, by conducting their parts on the same principles as Raffaele and the Greeks in higher matters.

"The form of a tree is beautiful, and the form of a fine woman, and a column, and a vase; but how can it be said," says Lord Jeffrey, "the form of a woman has anything in common with the form of a tree?" Simply, I reply, because the vase, the column, and the tree, can be proved to deserve the appellation of beautiful only as they each partake more or less of the form of a woman.

Have you any sensation of beauty from the form of the knarled oak, with its knotty irregularities, and its patriarchal age? But have you not with the waving willow, and trembling ash? Surely you have! Because the willow and ash do, and the knarled oak does not, partake of the form of that lovely creature, the basis of all beauty on earth.

Again, consider the emotions of sound: to which do you apply the appellation of beauty—to the harsh terrific blast of the trumpet, or to the tender mellifluous harmony of the flute or *Æolian* harp?

There is no inconsistency, then, in saying the tree, the vase, the column, and the woman, are beautiful, and have principles common to each to excite the emotion by form.

Nothing is so perplexing to any one who begins to think on the subject of beauty as the absurd misapplication of the term; but because the term is so thought-

lessly misapplied, that is a very shallow basis to assert nothing of the sort exists of itself, or can of itself, before association excite the emotion.

Because a venerable mathematician calls the proof or problem beautiful—because an old nurse calls the baby's food, when it is not burnt, beautiful; or an old cook says a bird is beautifully done—because an alderman calls the tendinous side of a round of beef beautifully silvery—because a John Dory, to an epicure, is, as he expresses it, a beautiful sight, though the Dory is the most frightful monster of the sea—because a skilful engineer, at a siege, after having fired a shell, and seen it blow a dozen sweet women and infants to atoms, looks up in your face with victorious complacency, and scientific rapture, and says, "Is not that beautiful practice?"—because Lieut.-Col. Wheeler, in his despatch (Camp Cudjah, Aug. 24, 1840) to Captain Douglas, describing the storming of an Affghanistan fort, says, "I directed Lieut. Paterson to concentrate as heavy a volley as he could close to the gate; this had the desired effect, shook the gate, and enabled the Grenadiers of the 48th, under that officer, to force it, and carry the fort in *beautiful style, bayonetting all within it!*"—because these absurdities happen every day, is Lord Jeffrey to say, see how people differ! How can it be possible that beauty is the object of a peculiar sense, when persons evidently in possession of their senses and understanding discover nothing of beauty in some objects which rouse the emotion in others? I reply, this would be plausible and unanswerable, if the cook and the alderman, the nurse, the engineer, and the mathematician, had any emotion of beauty in their various sensibilities; but they have not: they used it as a general term to convey their gratification at the result of certain com-

binations successfully accomplished. They misapplied the term, and we are more foolish than they in adopting their individual misapplication, and argue, in consequence, the non-existence of such a quality as beauty, or a particular organization of brain, to receive exclusive impressions from such objects, constituted by nature to affect such organizations.

Alison, and the able writer in the *Encyclopædia*, consider that beauty is not an inherent quality of objects, but that our sense of beauty depends entirely on our previous experience of simpler pleasures or emotions, and in suggesting agreeable or interesting sensations by which we have become familiar by the agency of our common sensibilities.

If this be so, the nurse and her companions are all right in the application of the term beautiful, for all of them meant to express interesting sensations by the agency of their common sensibilities.

What argument can be brought to prove the greyhound handsome, and pug-dog ugly, if the suggesting agreeable sensations be the cause of beauty? On this principle, I can irrefutably prove the pug-dog an enchanting beauty.

Suppose any of us had a lovely child fall into the water. Suppose a black-nosed, goggle-eyed, little pug jumped in and saved your lovely child; could you ever again see the little hideous rogue without the most delightful and agreeable reminiscences and suggestions? But suppose that, instead of the pug, the bending, graceful, greyhound jumped in, and instead of saving your drowning dear, he bit off his lovely head: surely you could never see that dog again without a train of

emotions the very reverse of agreeable or grateful, or of any of those sensations beauty occasions.

Would you put forth your associations as evidence the greyhound must be ugly, and the pug a beauty divine?

This is the law of association pushed to the extreme.

According to this, ugliness and beauty are the same inherently, and association makes all the difference.

This is the fatal result of Alison and Jeffreys's principle of making the object itself nothing in form and construction, and the suggestions connected with it everything. Now ugliness and beauty are not the same; the pug is ugly, and the greyhound beautiful; Venus and Madame de Stael are not the same; Apollo and a Chimpanzee are not the same. We do not inquire at first sight, we feel they are not; we feel first, and then we analyse.

Had the full cheek, the raven locks, the rosy and oval cheeks, the lustrous eyes, and strawberry lip of a lovely woman, always accompanied age, and the withered face, and toothless mouth, and palsied hand, ever attended youth, beauty would have changed its objects, say our critics. Of course! I do not affirm such an absurdity as that beauty is independent of such a powerful law of our nature as association; I maintain it is not the sole or the principal cause, as two such eminent men as Jeffrey and Alison affirm, and I can prove it from their own works. I maintain there is something in the construction of every object named beautiful which excites the emotion independently of all association, and that subsequent reminiscences but confirm the first impression.

Had God made us without heads, or one eye between

our shoulders, and another in front, our noses at our chins, and our mouths above our noses, there is not the least doubt our notions of beauty would have been of a very peculiar kind. But he has not done so, and we have 5000 years' security he never intends it; we are bound to reason on things as they are and ever have been, and not torture ourselves by imagining things as they never have been, and never will be; there is no utility in such extreme suppositions.

Sir Joshua says, if a negro painted the goddess of beauty he "would paint her with thick lips, woolly hair, short nose, low forehead, and black skin, and he would do very unnaturally if he did not."

But this is no proof he is right.

God made man in his own image, says the Bible. Do you believe it was in that of a Negro? The Negro would say, yes; but we say, no: and we will show him why the arguments are in our favour.

The great distinction of man from brute is the intellectual power; the seat of that power lies in the brain; health, size, and quality of brain, are indications of that power, and that power never exists internally without size, health, and quality externally; size of brain requires size of skull which covers it; size of skull is therefore a legitimate indication of great intellectual power.

Negroes have not yet established a higher degree of intellectual power than the comprehension of our inventions; they have yet given no evidence of the highest internal power, and they have given beyond all refutation the external sign of being deficient.

Therefore, if God made man in his own image, if intellect be the distinction of the Almighty, if the European

has given for ages more evidence of possessing that qualification, and Negroes are deficient of that mark of Godhead in as much as they are in brain, they can be proved to be so in form, face, and figure. Therefore, the Negro cannot be the image of his Maker, and his notions of his Creator's image, and what is essentially beautiful, are not to be taken as any sound argument against the possession of such a real property in Europeans as beauty, any more than that because the Chinese put on white for mourning, black is not more innately in harmony with sorrow on the commonest principles of things.

Alison is the writer who asserts more strenuously than any other on the non-existence of the property of beauty in any object independently of association; and yet (Vol. ii. p. 296) he acknowledges there is "beauty in certain forms and colours, considered simply as forms and colours."

Lord Jeffrey follows Alison; and yet he says, too (page 178), "the sense of beauty results instantaneously from the perception of the object; the discovery of its relations is a work of time." And yet Lord Jeffrey says, "no object is beautiful in itself, or could appear so, antecedent to our experience of direct pleasures or emotions:" then how can he reconcile this with his axiom, "that the sense of beauty is instantaneous?"

If the perception of the object excites an emotion of beauty instantly (all I contend for), and the discovery of its relations be a work of time, in which the sense of beauty must be lost in analysing its impressions, I do not see, really, on what possible grounds the object itself, be it what it may, can be denied to possess a particular quality which is alone capable of exciting this delightful

emotion ; or how, if there be no beauty independently of association, " certain forms and colours," as Alison admits, " can contain beauty simply as form and colour."

All love worth anything, since the world begun, has been love at first sight.

" They have *changed eyes*, delicate Ariel,
I'll set thee free for this."—*Shakspeare*.

Surely love at first sight is emotion from beauty antecedent to experience, or the slightest knowledge of each other, and antecedent to all experience of each other's virtues ; for the most eminent and celebrated lovers have been distinguished for mutual beauty of face and figure, and instant infatuation.

If Mr. Alison and Lord Jeffrey mean to say that a lover never feels his heart quiver till he has given way to a long train of associations, and then says " Bless my soul ! this must be a beauty, I will most undoubtedly fall in love ;" then, I maintain, neither the one or the other of these distinguished and amiable men have any sensibility to beauty, or ever were in love in all their lives.

Lord Jeffrey denies any organization of brain for the impressions of colour, as he does for beauty, and suspects the enthusiasm of great artists for colour to be what he terms jargon. Suppose any painter had so spoken of any enthusiasm expressed by critics, or philosophers, or literary men, for any of their peculiar feelings.

So the intense sensibility to the beauty of colour in nature, felt and expressed by Titian or Rubens, or Paul Veronese, or Tintoretto, or Correggio, or our own Reynolds, was jargon !

If there be no distinct organic sensibility to colour, independent of, and in defiance of association, what

pleasurable sensibilities could be excited by the representation of a dunghill! Yet Rembrandt would have so painted a dunghill as to have given the spectator the feelings of the most delightful colour, in spite of associations the most offensive.

So much for the jargon of Lord Jeffrey, and the pretensions of those who mistake their organic insensibility to beauty in form or colour, as a power superior to that with which great artists are gifted.

From beginning to the end of this able sophistication in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Lord Jeffrey treats with contempt the system of difference inherent in the organic sensibilities of mankind—the base, and only base, of the theory of the emotion of beauty, sublimity, or the picturesque. And yet he seems to infer all men are not equally susceptible; he acknowledges what it is impossible to refute. Then there is a difference in men as to their capability of receiving impressions, and I reply, that difference constitutes the cause of the difference of the impressions each man receives from the same object.

Twenty artists shall paint the portraits of the same beauty; all shall be like the object, and all unlike each other, from the same reason.

It was the fashion, in Johnson's time, to consider difference in organic construction, and difference of intellectual endowment from God, as beneath reason, and no man tried to keep up this infatuation longer than Reynolds. And yet St. Paul says*, "Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner and another after that;" and a higher authority, Christ himself, asserts, "To whom much is given, much will be expected." So

* 1st Epistle to Corinthians, chap. vii. verse 1.

that the inference is, all men are not equally gifted. Then the question is, gifted in what? Of course, intellectual power and moral virtue, or bodily strength; but the former is meant. Then where is the seat of intellectual power and moral perception? In the brain. Then the perfection of either depends upon the gift; that is, the original natural organization from birth? Undoubtedly. Then the external senses convey impressions of external objects to the internal organization, the gift of God, for its perception; so that if the internal organization be not gifted, it perceives not the external to the same degree as the man would whose internal organization (the gift of God) is more perfect, and more capable of receiving external impressions? Surely. Then as beauty from form or colour is an external impression conveyed internally by the senses, the degree of perceiving it will depend on the capability of the organization to perceive, and as all men, St. Paul and Our Saviour say, are not equally gifted, the difference in the perception of beauty existing in different individuals is accounted for, not from there being no such thing as beauty, but from there being no such thing as equality of capability to perceive whatever constitutes beauty, owing to the difference originally existing in the intellectual susceptibility of men.

Lord Jeffrey denies that the beauty of a sentient living creature depends on physical attributes, which it shares with the vilest matter around it, but upon qualities peculiar to that creature, and I maintain the beauty of a sentient living creature does not depend on the qualities peculiar to that creature, for if this principle were true, Socrates was an angel in beauty, and Alcibiades a fright.

Does not a sentient living creature, the most beautiful,

the most intellectual, the most moral, share with the vilest creeping worm the necessity of sleeping, eating, and digestion? And what disgrace is it to a sentient living creature, to share with inanimate matter, beauty in physical attribute of form and construction? Will you believe a sentient living creature, "with mind looking before and after," shares with the vilest insect—death!—rots, and is eaten? It cannot be!—"Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole."

And yet Lord Jeffrey, as if destined to refute himself in this essay, after all this, actually acknowledges that all men's perception of beauty is in proportion to their sensibility. In acknowledging this, he acknowledges all; and accounts himself why there are so many opinions, and so many theories regarding this enchanting perfection.

We will now approach the conclusion of this interesting subject, and by going into what is considered beautiful, and what ugly, in the form and face of an intellectual being, prove, I hope, there is a basis for beauty of emotion, independent of expression or association, based on form: and that is the beauty the great artist has to do with, and which the Greeks attained in a more perfect degree than any other nation that ever existed in the world.

I should be sorry indeed if in expressing my opinions freely, in opposition to such an eminent and acute man as Lord Jeffrey, it should be considered disrespectful or unbecoming; to know Lord Jeffrey is to be affectionately and sincerely attached to him, and I am quite sure, of all men, he would be the last to entertain so unjust a suspicion.

Alison denies there is any innate beauty in certain con-

structions and proportions of the human face or figure, and that the beauty depends on the expressions they convey.

I maintain there is decided emotion of beauty excited by certain proportions and constructions of the human figure, as well as in brute figures, or forms and figures without life; or how could an emotion of beauty be excited by the shape of a milk jug?

What is the meaning of the opinion so often given in society—a perfectly beautiful face without expression, is to me insipid?

I grant she is beautiful in the extreme, is often said, but I prefer a countenance not so regular, not so beautiful, which has more expression, and less of what is called regular beauty—that is, beauty dependent on proportion, construction, relation, fitness, and curve alone; without either expression, or intellectual or passionate.

Many countenances, however beautiful, are not permanently so. (Alison, pages 270—271.) “Domestic harassings destroy them.”

I reply, never: a face constructively beautiful in form, no expression can destroy; malignity, revenge, anger, hypocrisy, anxiety, vary its expressions, but never destroy its beauty; for you will always find them the bad passions of a beautiful countenance.

Bad passions, sorrow, and sickness, in a beauty, are the sorrows and sickness of a beauty, whilst a face or form constructively ugly cannot express bad or good passions but in an ugly way.

Character, colour, expression, can never excite the emotion of beauty; if form, the basis, be defective, it is impossible.

Alison refers to Mrs. Siddons, and says, every expres-

sion, however various, was equally beautiful; and had there been in any form permanent beauty, that could not have been the case.

Now, had not the permanent construction of Mrs. Siddon's face been beautiful, as it was, none of her various expressions could have been so; for let expression vary a face as it will, again remember, they are but the variations of a form perfect in its original formation.

What is thus said of the form of the face can be applied to the figure, and to all form in general; for grace, action, gesture, and motion, are but the result of perfect combination, and neither one or the other, under any circumstances of association, can be graceful, or beautiful, unless the construction be perfect.

The human head is composed of skull and face; form is the basis of the emotion of beauty both in one and the other.

The interest or emotions of the most intense nature may be excited by the expressions of the face, or the agitation of the forehead; but if form be defective either in a face or skull, evidence of vast intellectual power by a large forehead, or great depth of feeling by expression of feature, never did rouse the emotion of beauty by themselves alone.

Alison divides the colour of the human head into permanent and variable; the permanent is the characteristic colour; the variable that from expression, passion, health, or disease.

Alison denies there is any inherent beauty in colour: if not, how could the colour of a dunghill give delight?

First, there must be in colour a power to excite emotions of pleasure in certain individuals whose brain is susceptible to the impression as in form; Titian, Tin-

toretto, Rubens, Vandyke, Reynolds, and Rembrandt, were such individuals ; whilst Julio Romano, Poussin, Jouvenet, David, and Denner, and Raphael Mengs, were not such individuals ; for they were insensible to beauty in colour, and never excited the emotion by their works.

If my theory be the true one,—that there is nothing in the world beautiful, but the perfect face and figure of woman, and that there is nothing dignified with that appellation which has not either by association, or form, or colour, some relation to that creature,—then what is beautiful has a base and hundreds of thoughts, because they are powerful ; hundreds of theories, because they can be proved ; hundreds of tastes, appetites, feelings, sentiments, and sights, are beautiful only as they can be traced to the sympathies that face and form invariably excite ; and if they cannot be traced either in form, colour, or association, to such a basis, the term beautiful ought to be discarded as inappropriate, and others more fit adapted in their stead.

We do not bestow the term beauty on the Hercules, but the Apollo ; not on the Gladiator, but the Bacchus ; not on the Juno, or Minerva, but the Venus ; because the manly form is never termed beautiful, but as it approaches, without losing its characteristics, the delicacy and tenderness of woman's form.

The manly has nothing essentially beautiful, physically or by association, unless it so approach.

If form were not the basis of this emotion, anger in a beautiful face would be offensive ; and amiability in an ugly face beautiful. Let us show you a perfectly formed face in a passion, and pleasure in a face utterly disproportioned ; and which will you pronounce the most beautiful of the two ?

No. 2.



Aimable, pas beau.

No. 1..



Belle, pas aimable.

With No. 1, the associations are unpleasant,—but is she ugly?

With No. 2, the associations are amiable; he is “*bon père, bon mari*,”—but is he beautiful?

To prove to you form is the basis of beauty in the figure, conceive the attitude of the Apollo in a fat man.

But it is said, how do you account for a beauty in infancy, in age, or youth? Age is never beautiful, unless it be the remains of beauty in youth; and infancy and youth are never beautiful, but as they give symptoms of approaching what is beautiful in maturity, without losing the characteristics of their own period of life.

Alison adds, a proper conformation, which is necessary for the purposes of the animal frame, is as essential to the beauty of attitude and gesture as it is to form in general. No form, says he, which is disproportioned, is beautiful, but every form proportioned is not beautiful.

Because, I reply, proportion alone is not the cause.

No attitude, says he, can be beautiful in a form deformed; but, according to himself, it may be so if expression or association be the cause of beauty; but if it depend, as I maintain, on a perfect combination of all the constituent parts, every attitude must be beautiful, and expression too, whatever may be the association, and cannot help being so.

Alison adds, “that without the countenance, that is, without knowing the mind of the figure, we could not speak with certainty as to the beauty of the limbs.” (Vol. II.) Now we have him.

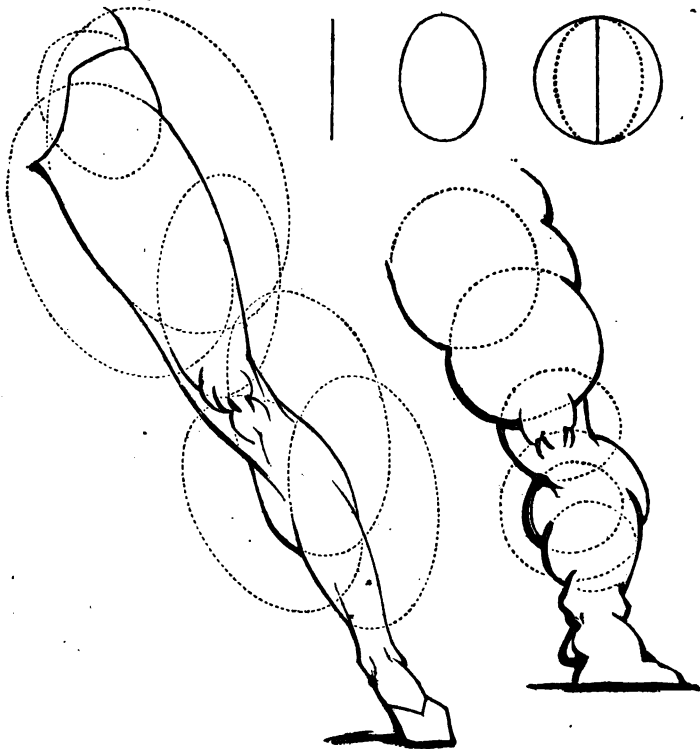
I appeal to you all, if the glorious fragments of the Elgin Marbles are not a volcano of refutation to this lamentable law. Why is this? Because form alone, independent of mind or intention, as expressed by the countenance, has the power to excite this divine emotion of beauty, or how could the limbs of the Elgin Marbles

alone have made the hearts of the world vibrate at first sight, without head or face?

Yet proportion, fitness, relation, unity—perfect construction in any face, form, limb, or vase, will not excite the emotion of beauty, if the curves of that face, or form, or limb, or vase, extend to excess, or approach to deficiency. The curve of the circle is excess, the straight line is deficiency, the ellipsis is the degree between, and that curve added to, or uniting with, proportion, combination.

It is conclusive to add, the elliptical curve is the regulating curve in the form and features of a perfect woman, and there lies the great secret of the emotion thus produced by an inanimate milk-jug.

Let us try a limb where all the curves shall be circular,



and one where they shall be all elliptical—the beauty of one and deformity of the other will be apparent.

Alison adds, there is in the works of the ancients no standard proportion. This is quite a mistake: Polycletes, says Pliny, made a figure called the Canon. The figures, on the Greek vases are one standard, and Phidias seems, in the Elgin Marbles, to have one standard for men, and one for gods.

If there be anything intrinsically beautiful, says Lord Jeffrey, how is it men differ in Africa, Asia, Lapland, Patagonia, and Circassia? Apply this to religions: if there be anything intrinsically religious, how is it men differ? Oh! say philosophers, from ignorance. Is there, then, nothing intrinsically religious, because men differ?

The doctrine of association is, that there is nothing intrinsically beautiful in itself independent of experience, although the sensation be organic and instantaneous. Now we artists know the organic sensation from the impression the objects make must precede the association; that in proportion to the refinement of the organic sensibility of the brain of the individual, is the impression; and repeated impressions produce reminiscences of previous pleasure: and that is association which, without being the cause, certainly increases the pleasure of the emotion called beauty. Association is subsequent, and must be; for as such individuals are instantaneously impressed by certain combinations of form and colour: there must be, in the combinations, a portion of the beauty, which causes the sensation at the instant.

Dr. Reid says, "matter is not beautiful in itself, but derives its beauty from the expression of mind." Respectfully I differ from so deep a thinker. Whatever matter is a sign of beauty or sublimity, must have in

itself a portion of that it is the sign of, or how can we separate the emotion from the sign when the impression is made at first sight, before mind could be associated.

In one of the dialogues of Plato, Socrates says, "There is nothing beautiful but what is good;" and yet, directly after, he adds, "Phidias was skilful in beauty." Now he was a sculptor. We never heard of the moral virtues of his Olympian Jupiter, or that his Minerva was distinguished for visiting the poor and the afflicted; and yet, according to Plato, they were beautiful, and excited the emotion, and are held up as examples all over the world.

When Adam first saw Eve, what experience could he have had of the emotion of beauty from form? None: and yet such an impression was made by this creature, so lovely fair—

That what seem fair in all the world seemed now
Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained;
Or in her looks, which from that time infused
Sweetness into my heart, *unfelt* before:
And in all things from her air inspir'd
The spirit of love.

——— On she came.

Grace was in all her steps, Heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.

Afterwards Adam might analyze the emotion, but I affirm the object made the impression, first; continued to make the impression, first; and will continue to make the impression on all future generations; and the impression so made is the emotion of beauty. And objects which are not sentient or living when they excite the emotion by form do it because they partake more or less of the form of the creature which is the origin of such sensibilities.

Alison says, "The interesting form of woman may be condemned to the debasing offices of servitude, or in angry contests of domestic economy. In such situations, is the attitude or gesture of any form (however naturally beautiful in itself,) ever remarked as beautiful?" (Page 363, Vol. I.)

I reply, most undoubtedly; no woman, naturally beautiful, can be employed in any office where her beauty will not be visible, and rather heightened than debased by the contrast. Lady Hamilton was cleaning the step (as housemaid) of Boydell's door, when her beauty attracted the notice of those who brought her into fame: and what does the world mean by—she is a beautiful devil?

And pray, my friends, what does Mr. Alison mean by "naturally beautiful," (here we have him again,) after having written two interesting volumes, to prove that there is nothing naturally beautiful in form or colour, independent of expression or association.

Of course there is a natural beauty, and a natural sublimity, the impressions of which association does increase, but does not create.

It was this conviction that animated the great Greek artists in their works, and in all their forms, from the goddess to the milk-jug; for everything they executed was done on the theory that matter had in itself the power, under certain combinations, to excite the emotion of beauty.

To sum up rapidly, recapitulate, and conclude—

Lord Jeffrey says, (page 176,) "Beauty is not a simple sensation, because no two men agree about beauty, whilst all men agree in a simple sensation; all (says he,)

agree grass to be green!—because the greenness of grass is a simple sensation.” Now it has been shewn there was living a man who saw grass—to be scarlet.

All these, therefore, do not agree in a simple sensation, and Lord Jeffrey's first proposition falls to the ground.

2ndly.—The emotion of beauty, (Lord Jeffrey says,) is caused by association. The emotion of beauty, he says, is instantaneous, (page 179,) and he says association is a work of time. Association, therefore, cannot be the cause, but the consequence of the emotion.

His second proposition falls to the ground.

3rdly.—All men, (says Lord Jeffrey,) do not agree on beauty; therefore, there is nothing intrinsically beautiful; yet Lord Jeffrey acknowledges, all men's perception of beauty is in proportion to their sensibility, (page 196); therefore all men do not possess the same degree of sensibility. Men not agreeing on what is beauty, cannot be owing, then, to there being nothing intrinsically beautiful, because any object intrinsically beautiful cannot by men of different sensibilities be perceived alike.

The third proposition must also strike his colours.

There is no form beautiful, says Alison, independent of association; yet, he says, forms and colours are beautiful simply as forms and colours, (page 296, Vol. II.), now, if they are beautiful simply as such, they are beautiful intrinsically; that is, by their nature.

Alison acknowledges things are naturally beautiful, that is, possessing the quality of beauty by their nature: objects beautiful by nature must be beautiful independent of association, and must excite the emotion previously to the suggesting of pleasurable remembrances, for with the emotion of things first felt there can be no sug-

gestions of previous feelings, which were never excited before.

Having thus laid before you my objections to the theories of others as applied to our art, where beauty is or ought to be the principal emotion excited, will you permit me to conclude by saying, that though convinced the basis of beauty is the form of women, yet I would illustrate the emotion as explained by two divisions.

1st.—Beauty purely intellectual, which is not excited through the organ of sight at the instant, but by association, and memory of previous impressions.

2nd.—Beauty purely physical, where the impression is made by form and colour at once on the brain, by the nerve, and through the eye, independent of all association.

Thus, when Ophelia says,—

“I would have given you some violets, but they all withered when my poor father died,”—

Here is beauty by association of the most exquisite nature—the violets given her by her lover, who accidentally murdered her father, withered at his death! The violets, a flower of natural beauty, from colour, as it were, sympathising at this touching calamity, and she herself insane from the same cause: your imagination pictures to you the whole of the idea, and though colour, form, expression, make an important part of the association, yet you feel the associations at the moment are purely mental, totally independent of sight at the time.

Shakspeare, of course, teems with such beauties, and with both species. Thus, when Imogen dies, and the boys bury her, they sing over her tender and lovely body a dirge; the beauty at the moment is intellectual, though the basis of the association is a creature perfect in form

and colour, and which has interested the perceptions of those who lament her first through the eye.

Fear no more the heat of the sun,
Nor the furious winter rages ;
Thou thy worldly task has done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages.

Fear no more the frown of the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke,
Care no more to clothe and eat,
To thee the reed is as the oak.

Again, when they bury her, and strew her lovely form with flowers, every sweet flower mentioned is coupled with a relation to the beauty intellectual, purely so, and yet, though based again in form and colour, the connection and association are imaginative at the time.

———— With fairest flowers,
While summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave ; thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, *pale primrose*, nor
The azure hare-bell, like thy veins ; no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom, not to slander,
Out-sweetened not thy breath !

Every beauty here (and it is all beauty) is caused by the relation at once conveyed to the imagination—the source of association ; the *pale* primrose is compared to her *pale* face ; her blue and beautiful veins, shining through her ivory skin, to the azured hare-bell ; and her sweet breath was not out-sweetened by the leaf of eglantine !

All these feelings pass through the mind at once, independent of external vision at the moment, are purely associated and intellectual, and owe their beauty to the

sympathies with woman, and are essentially feminine to the very core.

As a specimen of the beauty physical by form and expression, one of the boys says,

How found you her ?

Thus smiling,

————— her right cheek reposing

On a cushion.

And Homer's description of Venus approaching Anchises, and her effect on the woods, the birds, the sea, the fiercest animals, may be referred to the same principle.

To conclude, every thing in the world which causes the emotion of beauty, and can positively be defined by form and colour, I would call the beauty physical, which, by its construction, first makes the impression on the brain, and subsequently excites the association, and belongs to the art of design ; while all beauty which excites the emotion by the association and relation presented to the imagination, and is not at the moment present to the sight, the beauty intellectual ; and that in both cases nothing is beautiful, physically or intellectually, in thought or form, but what has a feminine tendency, and can be traced to the perfection in form and sympathies to woman : whilst all emotions of sublimity are based on the attributes and associations of God !



APPENDIX.



APPENDIX.

THE following letter from Lord Elgin's Secretary, Hamilton, will be an interesting document in the history of the removal of these immortal works :—

12, Bolton Row, Dec. 25, 1840.

MY DEAR HAYDON,

* * * * *

The rock on which we split, was a rock "à fleur d'eau," in the Island of Cerigo, close to the mouth of the harbour; we were not in our direct course for England, but had been obliged to put about the night before, in consequence of having a leak in part of the ship, where the weight of the Marbles laid her too deep in the water.

I introduced Canova first to the Elgin Marbles, and I shall never forget his astonishment and delight, when gazing upon them, as if they really were motionless living figures: he said, "If I were a young man, and had to begin again, I should work on totally different principles from what I have done, and form, I hope, an entirely new school." It was evident, as you say, that he at once saw that all the chefs-d'œuvre, supposed of antiquity, which he had studied and admired at Rome, or elsewhere

were in his eyes as naught ; and you are aware that even before he had seen them, on the description given to him of them, by Lord Elgin at Rome, he had recommended never to have them touched by the hands of a restorer. Indeed, we may date from that period the improved feeling now existing at Rome respecting the futility of restoring antique fragments,—a practice now become almost obsolete, with the great exception of the *Ægina Marbles* by Thorwaldsen.

Payne Knight had delivered his opinions of the inferior character of these Marbles, and of their having been in part, indeed, set up by Hadrian, whilst Lord Elgin was still a *détenu*, amongst other English, in France ; this was a very unlucky circumstance for their reception in this country. “ *Les absens ont toujours tort.* ”

All the artists who conducted Lord Elgin's operations were engaged by me, except Lusieri, the landscape painter, who was recommended by Sir W. Hamilton, and this not at Naples, which could not have supplied them, but at Rome, where I went at Lord Elgin's request, from Messina.

I had nothing to do with the details of the removal of the Marbles from Athens ; this was under the direction of Lusieri, though I happened to be present, when the ship *Mentor*, which was wrecked, sailed from the Piræus with a portion of them, about fifteen or eighteen large cases, four of which I recovered that year by means of the divers ; and the rest were found at the bottom of the sea, by the same divers, two years after, where the ship had gone to pieces.

These divers were not the inhabitants of the coast ; *i. e.* the neighbouring coast, but I had to send for them to the islands of Cos, Calymno, and Syme, on the

opposite coast of Asia Minor; and I waited their arrival in Cerigo, in which island I waited four months, to carry on and superintend the undertaking.

My valuation before the Committee is, I believe, acknowledged now to be the nearest at least to the real value; though still, if *now* to be valued, far from adequate.

Yours faithfully,

W. R. HAMILTON, F.R.S. F.S.A. &c. &c.

B. R. Haydon, Esq.

TRANSLATION from the Italian of a *Fermain*, or Official Letter, from the Caimacan Pasha (who filled the office of Grand Vizier at the Porte, during that Minister's absence in Egypt) addressed to the *Cadi* or Chief Judge, and to the *Vaivode* or Governor of Athens, in 1801.

After the usual introductory compliments, and the salutation of peace,—“It is hereby signified to you, that our sincere friend, his Excellency Lord Elgin, Ambassador Extraordinary from the Court of England to the Porte of Happiness, hath represented to us, that it is well known that the greater part of the Frank (*i. e.* Christian) Courts are anxious to read and investigate the books, pictures, or figures, and other works of science, of the ancient Greek philosophers: and that in particular the ministers or officers of state, philosophers, primates, and other individuals of England, have a remarkable taste for the drawings, or figures*, or sculptures, remaining ever

* I wish to God they had.—B. R. H.

since the time of the said Greeks, and which are to be seen on the shores of the Archipelago, and in other parts ; and have in consequence, from time to time, sent men to explore and examine the ancient edifices and drawings, or figures. And that some accomplished Dilletanti of the Court of England, being desirous to see the ancient buildings, and the curious figures in the city of Athens, and the old walls remaining since the time of the Grecians, which now subsist in the interior part of the said place ; his Excellency the said Ambassador hath therefore engaged five English painters, now dwelling at Athens, to examine and view, and also to copy, the figures remaining there, *ab antiquo* : and he hath also at this time expressly besought us that an official letter may be written from hence, ordering, that as long as the said painters shall be employed in going in and out of the said citadel of Athens, which is the place of their occupations there ; and in fixing scaffolding round the ancient Temple of the Idols there ; and in moulding the ornamental sculpture, and visible figures thereon, in plaster or gypsum ; and in measuring the remains of other old ruined buildings there ; and in excavating, when they find it necessary, the foundations, in order to discover inscriptions which may have been covered in the rubbish ; that no interruption may be given them, nor any obstacle thrown in their way by the Disdar (or commandant of the citadel), or any other person ; that no one may meddle with the scaffolding or implements they may require in their works ; and that when they wish to take away any pieces of stone with old inscriptions or figures thereon, that no opposition be made thereto.

We therefore have written this letter to you, and expedited it by Mr. Philip Hunt, an English gentleman,

Secretary of the aforesaid Ambassador, in order that as soon as you shall have understood its meaning, namely, that it is the explicit desire and engagement of this Sublime Court, endowed with all eminent qualities, to favour such requests as the above mentioned, in conformity with what is due to the friendship, sincerity, alliance, and good will subsisting, *ab antiquo*, between the Sublime and ever durable Ottoman Court, and that of England, and which is on the side of both those Courts manifestly increasing ; particularly as there is no harm in the said figures and edifices being thus viewed, contemplated, and designed. Therefore, after having fulfilled the duties of hospitality, and given a proper reception to the aforesaid artists, in compliance with the urgent request of the said Ambassador to that effect, and because it is incumbent on us to provide that they meet no opposition in walking, viewing, or contemplating the figures and edifices they may wish to design or copy ; or in any of their works of fixing scaffolding, or using their various implements ; it is our desire that on the arrival of this letter, you use your diligence to act conformably to the instances of the said Ambassador, as long as the said five artists dwelling at Athens shall be employed in going in and out of the said citadel of Athens, which is the place of their occupations ; or in fixing scaffolding around the ancient Temple of the Idols, or in modelling with chalk or gypsum the said ornaments and visible figures thereon ; or in measuring the fragments and vestiges of other ruined edifices ; or in excavating, when they find it necessary, the foundations in search of inscriptions among the rubbish ; that they be not molested by the said Disdar (or commandant of the citadel) nor by any other persons, nor even by you (to whom this letter is addressed) ; and that no one meddle

with their scaffolding or implements, nor hinder them from taking away any pieces of stone with inscriptions or figures. In the above-mentioned manner see that ye demean and comport yourselves.

(Signed with a signet)

SEGED ABDULLAH KAIMACAN.

N.B.—The words in Italian rendered in two places “any pieces of stone,” are “qualche pezzi di pietra.”

TRANSLATION of a Letter from the CAVALIER CANOVA
to the EARL OF ELGIN.

London, 10th November, 1815.

MY LORD,

Permit me to express the sense of the great gratification which I have received from having seen in London the valuable antique Marbles, which you have brought hither from Greece. I think that I can never see them often enough: and although my stay in this great capital must be extremely short, I dedicate every moment that I can spare to the contemplation of these celebrated remains of ancient art. I admire in them the truth of nature united to the choice of the finest forms. Everything here breathes life, with a veracity, with an exquisite knowledge of art, but without the least ostentation or parade of it, which is concealed by consummate and masterly skill. The naked is perfect flesh, and most beautiful in its kind. I think myself happy in having been able to see with my own eyes these distinguished works; and I should feel

perfectly satisfied if I had come to London only to view them. Upon which account the admirers of art, and the artists, will owe to your Lordship a lasting debt of gratitude for having brought amongst us these noble and magnificent pieces of sculpture; and for my own part I beg leave to return you my own most cordial acknowledgments; and

I have the honour to be, &c. &c. &c.

CANOVA.

EVIDENCE OF W. R. HAMILTON.

As to Destruction.

It was clear that a continued system of destruction was going on, as well from the wantonness of the Turks, who amusedd themselves by firing upon the objects, and from the invitation which was held out by occasional travellers to the soldiers, and other people about the fortress, to bring them down heads, legs, or arms, or whatever else they could carry off.

There were nineteen figures in Nointel's time on the West Pediment; and seven or eight only left when Lord Elgin began.

EVIDENCE OF RICHARD PAYNE KNIGHT.

I think my Lord Elgin, in bringing them away, is entitled to the gratitude of the country, because otherwise they would have been all broken by the Turks, or broken piecemeal. I think the Government ought to make him a remuneration beyond my estimate.

EVIDENCE OF LORD ELGIN.

First, If he had more advantages than others.

As far as application was made through me, the same facilities were granted to others.

I did not receive more as Ambassador than they did as travellers.

If he got leave in his Ambassadorial character, or as an individual.

Q. In what way did your Lordship distinguish, in your applications to the Turkish Government, between your private and public capacity ?

A. I never named myself in my public capacity, not having authority to do so : this was a personal favour quite extra-officially to me.

Q. And asked as such ?

A. Asked as such, and granted as such.

Q. Does your Lordship suppose that if that application had been made at that particular period by any other person than the Ambassador of Great Britain, it would have been granted ?

A. In my own mind I think it would, if he had the means of availing himself of it : that is to say, if he had determined to risk his whole private fortune in a pursuit of such a nature.

If any other Ambassador had done it.

Louis XIV. had struggled to do the same ; Choiseul Gouffier began, and was obliged to leave off ; and Lord Elgin got for him the metope he left behind.

EVIDENCE OF WILKINS.

Q. Do you suppose that they lose much of their value as models of instruction by being removed from the edifices to which they originally belonged?

A. I do not think they lose anything; for there are so many on the spot still that the artist who goes there will find ample means of study.

Q. Does each particular piece of architecture lose its value as a model of instruction by its being removed from the edifice? A. No, I conceive not; because the means by which it is connected with the pieces adjoining are obvious.

Q. Do you think the Temples themselves much injured as schools of art in consequence of what Lord Elgin has taken from them? A. Not at all. See Report.

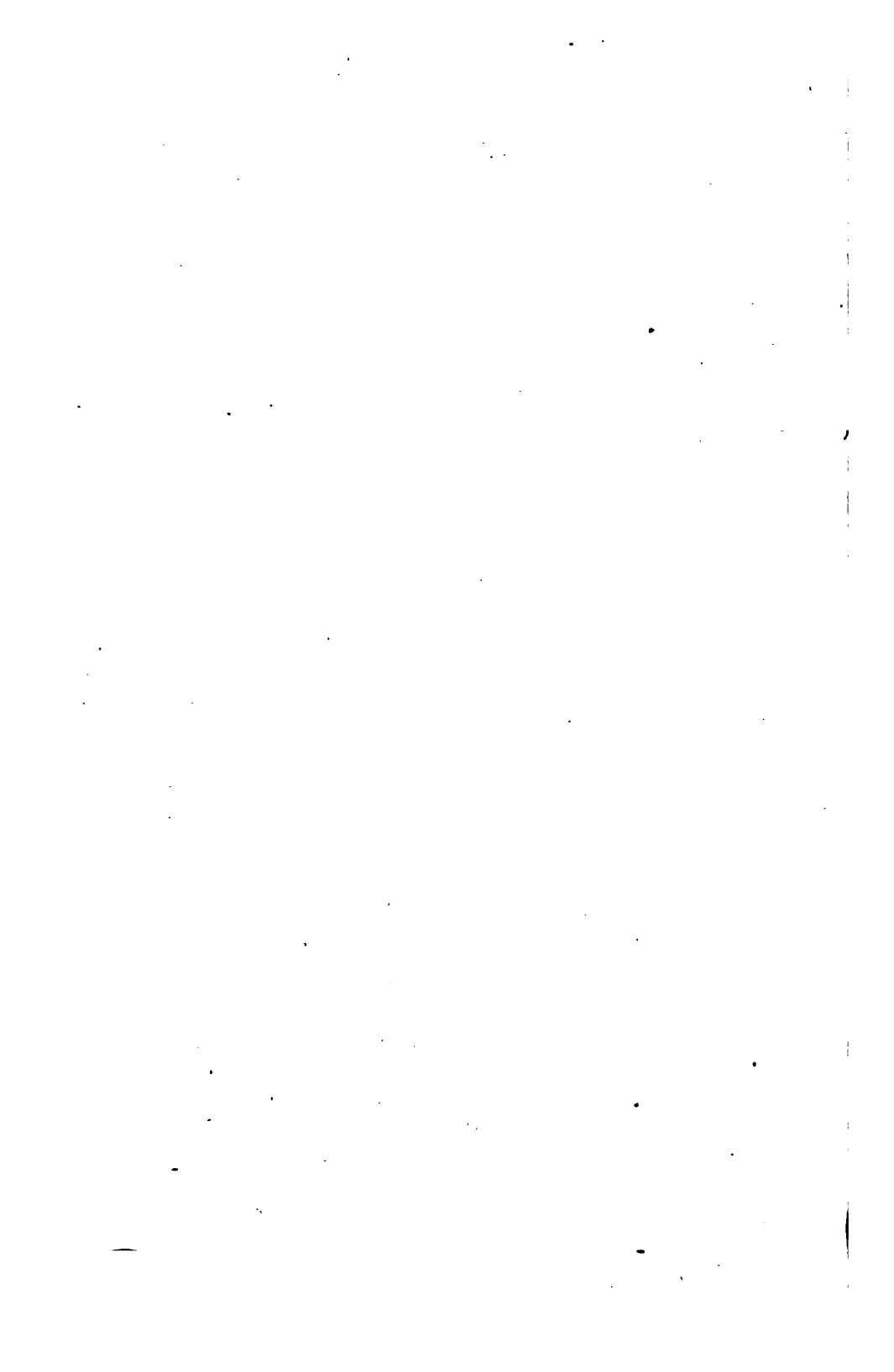
Lord Elgin's cases were moved from Privy Gardens to Park Lane, 1806—from 29th October to 8th of November inclusive. Began to unpack and arrange for inspection from 1807, Feb. 21st to 29th inclusive.

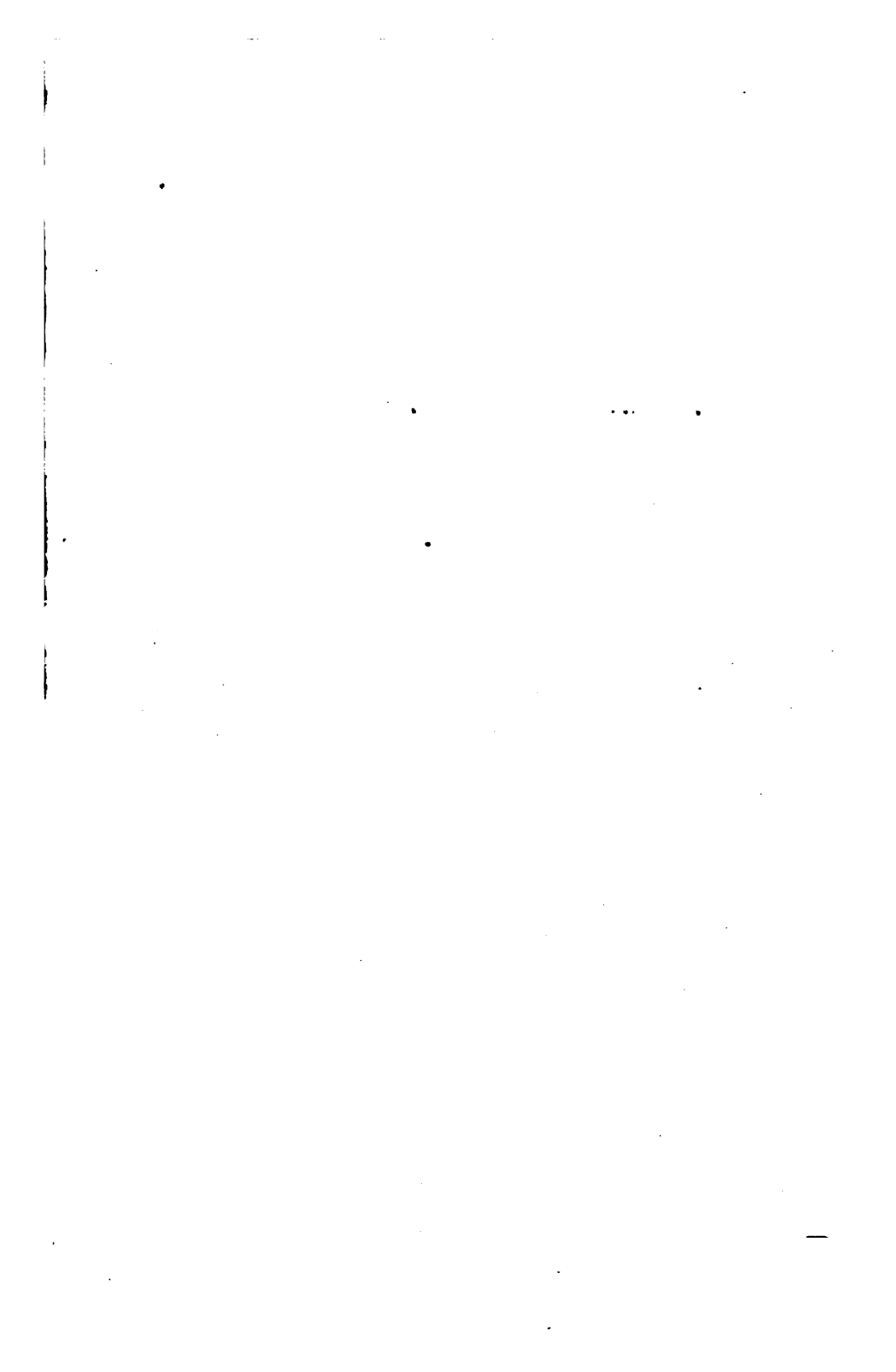
GEORGE BUCKMAN.

They were after removed to Burlington House, into a place built in the yard, when Lord Elgin sold his house, Park Lane, where they remained till bought and moved to the Museum, 1816.

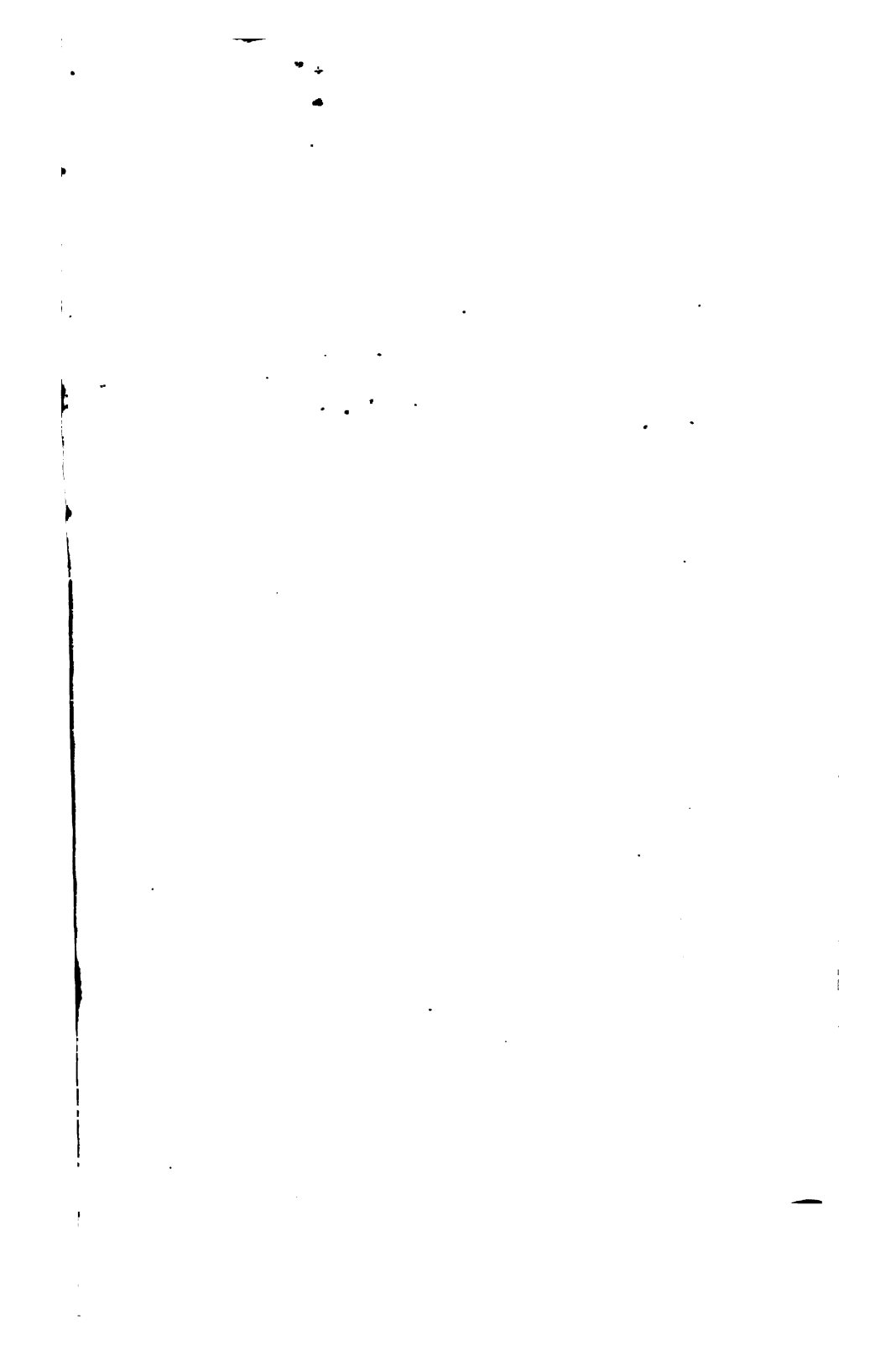
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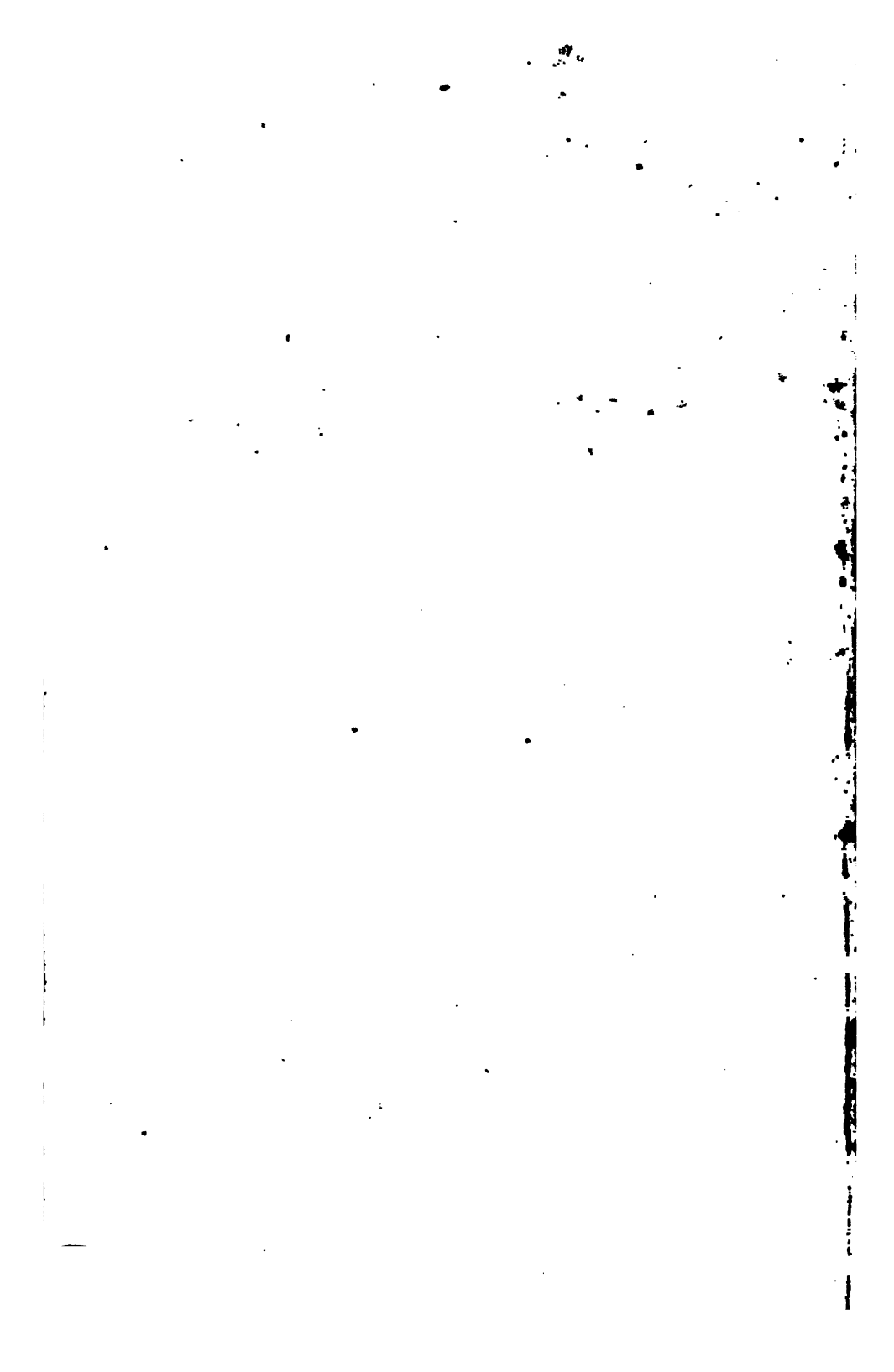
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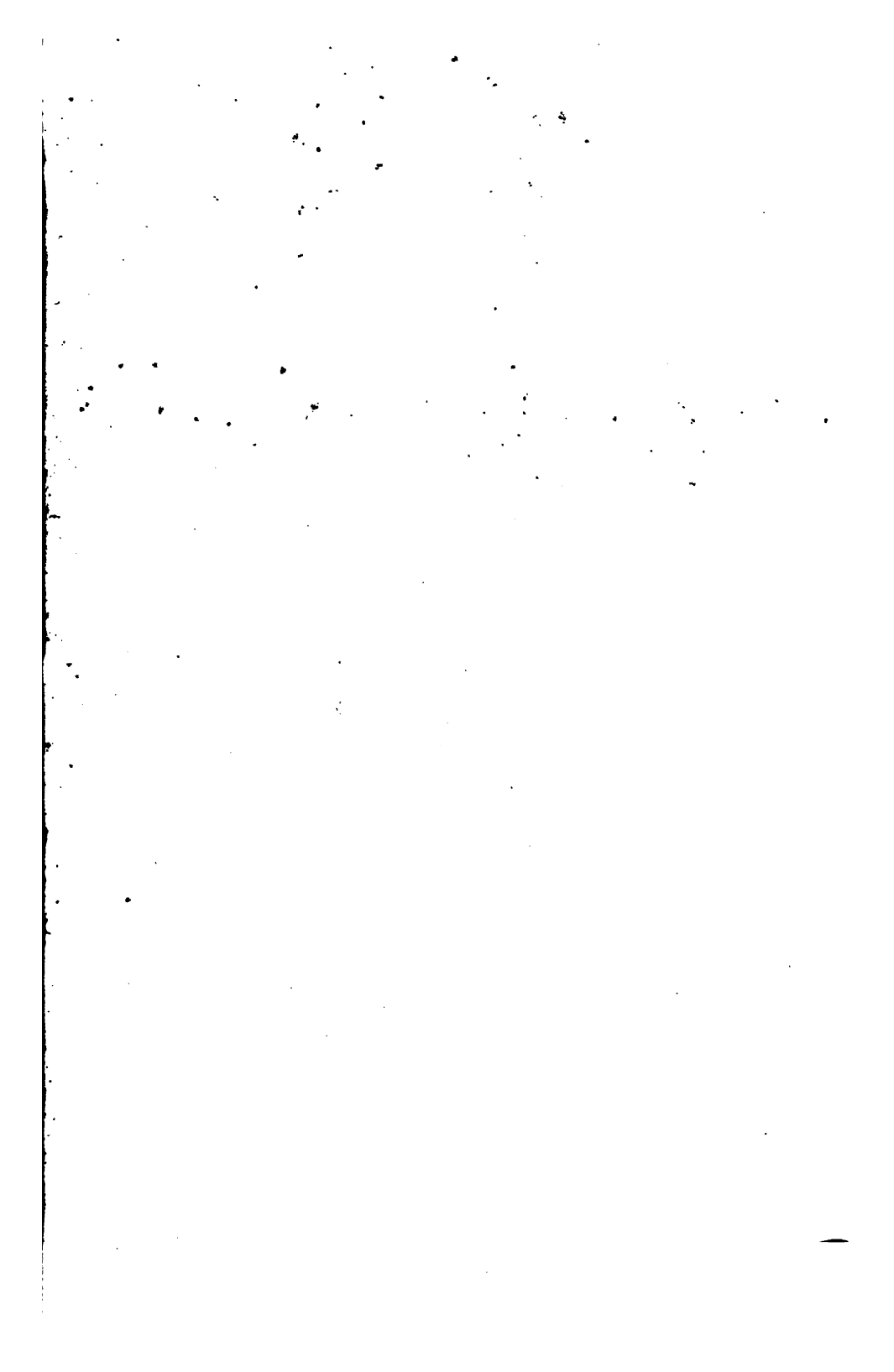












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